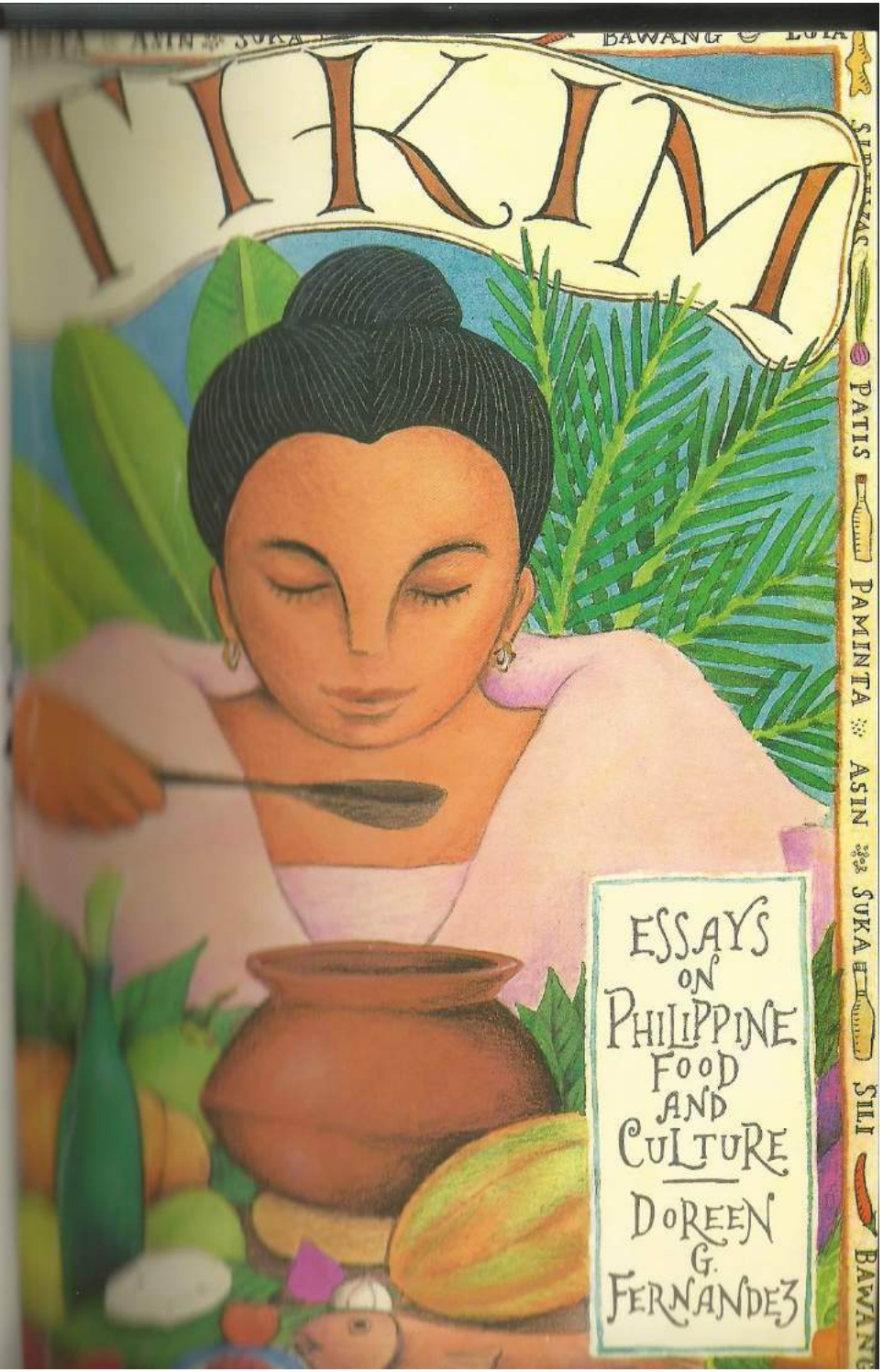
TIKIM
ESSAYS ON PHILIPPINE FOOD AND CULTURE
DOREEN G. FERNANDEZ
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Tikim: Just a Taste

Writing about food has been my pleasurable activity of some 25 years. I can recall a definite beginning: when Geny Lopez and Santi Dumlao asked my husband Wili to write a column for *The Manila Chronicle* "that would make mouths water." "Yes," answered Wili, "I'll eat; she'll write." He's the intuitive gourmet, you see, I the researcher and writer, and so he indeed ate -- and pronounced judgement. I ate too, and wrote -- and learned. Soon I was no longer interested in just describing the food; I wanted to know its history, its setting, its meaning. That was the beginning.

The learning process still goes on. My teachers are all those who give me information about food: market vendors, street sellers, cooks, chefs, waiters, restaurant and *carinderia* owners, farmers, tricycle drivers, gardeners, fishermen, *aficionados*, nutritionists, readers of my columns, friends, food critics and historians, fellow researchers, authors of books (and cookbooks), writers of columns, food anthropologists -- everyone who eats and cares.

The essays in this book are the fruits of this research and learning. All were published in the last ten years, in my columns in *The Philippine Daily Inquirer* and *Mr. & Ms.*, and in other publications like *The Graphic, Metro Magazine* and *The Sunday Inquirer Magazine*. Some were papers presented at conferences, like The Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery.

I have brought them together in this book to provide a taste -- TIKIM *lamang* -- of Philippine food -- its dishes, flavors, books, feasts, people, places, and history. This is the merest tasting -- there is much more to explore. I hope that some of the information gathered may be useful to others, may encourage some to explore further, might at the very least create a bit more pleasure, and may at the very best help the reader towards a wider understanding of what is Filipino.

Doreen G. Fernandez
13 June 1994

Writing About Food
Savor the Word, Swallow the World

When, two decades ago, I was asked to write a food column for *The Manila Chronicle*, my first reaction was: But I don't have enough of a vocabulary! How many words are there for "delicious"? I saw the job then as a simple case of reportage: you let your readers know how the food tasted; or if it was good enough to be worth trying; or, if it was unfamiliar, what it tasted like. It was exactly the same as reporting about a shopping center, a fashion show, or a bookstore. You listed the wares; you made a report.

Now, more than 20 years later, I know differently. Writing about food is not a matter of dipping into the thesaurus to discover the many ways to say "tasty." Instead it means digging deep into human experience, because tasting, eating and savoring are very intimate ventures. They are not external activities like shopping or travelling; they are -- literally and metaphorically -- gut experiences. They occur within the person, involving memory, sensation, pleasure. When one describes food, one does not use words alone, but the readers' remembering as well -- of past pleasures, savored sensations. One writes on and with the readers' palates, alluding to food tasted as children, drawing on their reservoirs of pleasure. In effect, one draws on all of the culture that shaped oneself and one's readers.

Let me illustrate. Is it possible, for example, to describe *sinigang*? To describe one particular encounter by abstracting from all of the sinigangs one has had through life, cooked by mothers, grandmothers, cooks, friends; eaten in the closeness of home, or on lakes or seashores; on days hurried or unhurried; sinigang of prawns or fish, pork or beef? One day my encounter was with a ten-inch long *ulang*, which I attempted to describe: "One carefully opened the head to catch every bit of orange-creamy delicious fat, some of it liquid enough to trickle down onto the rice, most of it semi-solid sensuousness. Then one sucked at all the other bits of flavor, including the ends of the 'whiskers.' The body and the tail, as large around as the largest prawn, were juicy, bouncy to the bite, and hoarded so much flavor that no *sawsawan* was necessary.

"The *kamias*-soured broth . . . was another turn in the experience; it refreshed, cooled, soothed -- and the mildly tart-hot ulang nestled in it gave succulence a new dimension. Finally, with no hurry, no thought except the moment, we took the long tentacles, and with little bites at each joint, drew out easily and smoothly the tender flesh within -- as large as Alaska King Crab legs, but infinitely sweeter." ("Serendipity and Ulang at Calumpit," PDI, May 26, 1987)

How did I hope to evoke understanding? Not by exact description but through memory. Only one who has experienced sinigang can tell the exact pitch of sourness that is perfection. Or the precise difference between souring by *sampaloc* and souring by *kamias*. Or the bounce with which a fresh ulang or prawn meets one's bite. To convey the taste of one sinigang, one must draw on the culture of seafood, on the Southeast Asian predilection for the souring that refreshes, on the native wisdom that decreed that fresh seafood be cooked simply, and on memories of home.

Obviously it was not the vocabulary that counted, or even the diction, the syntax, the sentence structure. It was getting the reader to see through the words to the experience. It was choosing the words that echoed, that reverberated -- *umaalingawngaw*. And then it was making the readers hear the silence between the echoes, and themselves load them with memory, sensation, and finally meaning.

The words need not even be descriptive at all. One may not even need to say *luscious, succulent, savory*. Very often the words themselves carry the evocativeness: "It is the simplest of *halo-halo*. The ice is *bagong kaskas;* one hears the distinctive rasp and whisper as one waits. At the bottom of the glass are only two ingredients: bits of sweetened *saging na saba*, and macapuno. Over these the finely scraped ice, and on top many soft slices of leche flan, fragrant with dayap rind. One has a choice of going down into it layer by layer, flan to ice to banana and coconut; or else mixing it all up the usual way, coming up with random and surprising teaspoons of banana, coconut and milky ice -- and finding out that it is *malapot* to the end . . ." ("A Hometown Halo-Halo," PDI, 22 December 1987).

No need for adjectives. The kaskas, the macapuno, the leche flan say it all. One assumes, adumbrates, and the reader responds in kind. For the names of food reverberate by themselves: "The

meal may start with *dimsum* or *hors d'oeuvre*, small cockles dipped in sauce, slices of abalone . . . pieces of ginger, prawns, stuffed olives and so on. Several poultry and meat dishes follow. Ducks and chickens with lotus seeds, chestnuts and walnuts, meat balls wrapped in dough as light as a dream, fledgling birds with tiny mushrooms or sucking pig with crackling of unbelievable delicacy." ("Eating out in Hong Kong" by F. D. Ommanney).

Often the very enumeration of ingredients tells the reader what the dish tastes like: "Bouillabaisse is all kinds of sea food, each kind prepared separately and then blended together with a sauce that is a reddish golden background for the chef's masterpiece. Half buried in this sauce were some tiny soft shell crabs, fat as butter and tender as marshmallow; a fillet of pompano, white and juicy; a crawfish or two, with shell of brilliant red; some pink-shelled shrimps, and many other of the good things with which a kindly Providence has filled the waters of the sea." ("Breakfast at Antoine's" by Henry Litchfield West).

If one should, however, wish to use adjectives, and also metaphors, similes and other such, then one should, but not feel limited. There is no vocabulary exclusive to food. One need not be confined to "crisp," "delectable," "palatable." Food can be and has been written about as if it were jewelry, or flowers, or love. Some may remember Stanza XXX of Keats's "The Eve of St. Agnes":

> And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
> In blanched linen, smooth, and lavender'd,
> While he from forth the closet brought a heap
> Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd;
> With jellies soother than the creamy curd,
> And lucent syrops, tinct with cinnamon;
> Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd
> From Fez; and spiced dainties, every one,
> From silent Samarcand to cedar'd Lebanon.

But that is poetry, one might say. Then here is Edith Templeton describing a dish called Cremona Mustard:

"This is a dish of fruit candied in syrup, to which a dash of pepper and mustard powder has been added. It serves as sweet spice to the mild meats and sets them on fire, in a cool and lovely way, like moonlight burning on water. The fruit is luminously

transparent, like semi-precious stones. I am given a plateful. There are several cherries, unevenly rounded like antique corals; a green pear of the size of a walnut, with the black pips shining like onyx; a larger pear of the colour of rose-quartz; a green fig clouded like a flawed emerald, a curved strip of pumpkin, reddish brown and veined like chrysoprase, and the half of an apricot which could have been carved out of a topaz. They are almost too splendid to be eaten. Before starting, I ponder over their many-hued flamboyance, and come to the conclusion that the colours of the Mustard of Cremona are those found in Veronese's paintings. It is an exceedingly *raffiné* dish, a Baroque dish, sweet, full-bodied, glowing and tingling. Life is beautiful."

Obviously she has leaped out of the stereotypes of food description. Not for her the information about ingredients and processes; instead, the visual thrill, the eye eventually feeding the taste. She goes on to describe the artichoke, using whichever words can combine to recall a multi-sensory experience:

". . . there are piles of artichokes to behold, of two kinds, some with bluish-purple tips, others shot with fawn. The main colour is a blunted green reminiscent of the patina of antique copper domes and spires.

"There is nothing clear-cut in the colouring of the artichoke. There is nothing straightforward in its taste, either. It has a melancholy flavour suggestive of mould and dust and of old books rotting away unread in the damp baronial libraries of old country manors.

"Because of its nostalgic complexity, and for many other reasons . . . the artichoke is my favourite vegetable.

"To start with, it is a thing of beauty. . . . Like so many excellent dishes the artichoke must be eaten with the fingers. It has to be approached at leisure and with reverence, leaf by leaf, and it yields its succulence in such frail measure that each morsel makes one long for the next. . . . surely, no right-thinking person would forego willingly the excitement of deflowering the artichoke. As leaf after leaf is stripped away, the texture becomes more tender and the flavour changes. Slowly, as the innermost leaves are reached, one finds that their flesh part is creamy and pale, with a melting taste which is exquisite. Eating an artichoke is like watching a dance of the seven veils. When the last wreath is peeled off from its base there is the last obstacle to overcome: the centre full of

strawy threads which must be scraped away carefully so as not to injure the tender heart underneath." ("Mantuan Artichokes," by Edith Templeton)

As my co-author Eddy Alegre has said, the experience of food is ephemeral. What one puts into the mouth is the end result of a process that starts with the sea, the soil, animal life. In the act of cooking, we make statements about ourselves -- about our understanding of relationships between ingredients; about our perception of taste and appropriateness. In the act of eating, we ingest the environment, but we do not stop at that, for we Filipinos make eating the occasion for ritual -- and ritual the occasion for eating. We build ceremony around it; we create celebration. To quote Eddy in our book *Sarap:* "We do not simply ingest our environment. We dance to it, dance with it, sing to it, caress it; we are in awe of it, and respectful towards it. Eating is not just ingestion. Eating is the occasion for the rites and rituals of our lives. Eating is praxis in social amenities. Eating is language that speaks of the nuances of what we are. Eating is making alive the various and variegated conjugations of our lives."

What happens beyond the tongue is alimentation, and that, no one has wished to capture in words that sing. But before and on the tongue, the experience is also visual, even auditory, for Sydney Smith has said: "My idea of Heaven is eating pate de foie gras to the sound of trumpets." It is certainly sensual and adventurous.

The writing done about food must be worthy of its subject. It should be not just utilitarian reportage, but writing that depends heavily on the unsaid, on the assumed, on the subtext of culture. It should require full participation from the reader, responses drawn from home and growing, from memory and pleasure. Because of this, it must be done with words that resound, and with the silence vibrating between and behind those words. Words that bear the culture within them need no adornment; they speak from the intimacy of the experience. And yet, when one reaches for images, the experience demands an unlimited horizon, reaching for words oft dedicated only to poetry, for words beyond the cooking stove, kitchen and plate, for words that convey sense, sensibility and sensuousness.

Writing about food should not be left to newspaper food columnists, or to restaurant reporters. It should be taken from us

by historians of the culture, by dramatists and essayists, by novelists, and especially by poets. For it is an act of understanding, an extension of experience. If one can savor the word, then one can swallow the world.

Food and Flavors

PAMINTA ASIN SUKA SILI BAWANG LUYA

Balut to Barbecue: Philippine Streetfood

Street food in the Philippines is not only a convenience for those without time to cook, or an economic phenomenon that flourishes during hard times. It is a lifestyle. Nineteenth century prints, paintings and accounts of the Spanish era by foreign travellers, pay notice to the wayside vendors of carabao's milk, rice cakes, and fruits. Karuth (1858) painted a woman steaming *puto bumbong* right on the road, and her customer eating the product on a low table in front of her. Chinese vendors are shown selling and serving noodles at roadside, or carrying their pastries and *pan de sal* in baskets balanced on a shoulder pole, or on a horse.

The vending continued into the American colonial period, and into the era called "peacetime" — before World War II — when in the districts of Manila, one could find meals and snacks on the sidewalk: *puto* and *bibingka* just cooked; Chinese *bicho-bicho*, *gurgurya*, and *buchi* a-frying; Japanese *halo-halo* or *mongo con hielo* mixed to order. During the Japanese occupation economic stress brought out such imaginative solutions to privation as *"castanyog"* — a piece of coconut meat roasted on live charcoal, aspiring to the flavor and texture of chestnuts *(castañas)* — and *binatog* — corn kernels boiled till puffed, eaten with grated coconut — both sold on the street.

Today in the 90s, the abundance and variety are so vast that I can luxuriously limit my field, and choose to discuss only food sold on streets, at roadsides, in the open, and meant to be eaten on the spot (not to take home, although one could); and only that sold by vendors without fixed stalls or stores. Even though some wheel-less street food stalls have the customers' benches or stools right on the street, with their backs fanned (and dusted) by the

passing traffic, these are not included, since they have fixed (albeit ramshackle) structures, and might be said to be a step toward the permanent eating place. For this exploration, ambulance, impermanence, and transience are primary criteria.

Since food types and selling times intersect and overlap, let us examine Philippine street food of the 90s from the points of view of place and manner of vending.

"Walking" Street Food. The direct heirs of the Chinese vendors who carried paired baskets balanced on shoulder poles are those who sell green mangoes as a snack. They travel the quieter roads, those without too much traffic, and will occasionally rest their baskets, sit on a curb or outside a building (like the U.P. Shopping Center), and peel the mangoes like flowers, then slip them into plastic bags (with salt or *bagoong*) for the customer. In traffic, of course, they use single baskets, with the mangoes already peeled and packaged.

Sharing the busier thoroughfares and dodging traffic with them are the sellers of other fruit (santol, mangosteen, lanzones, boiled bananas) and peanuts. The peanut vendors have progressed from pre-packaged nuts (in brown paper, in plastic) to tubfuls kept hot (fire beneath) on wheels. Even in a traffic jam, even between traffic light changes, they measure, package, receive payment for, and make change for hot boiled peanuts in the shell.

Also in this category is the *taho* vendor, who plies quiet residential areas. He gets his soy bean curd from a factory, slices it and adds syrup and flavoring, and carries this from house to house in aluminum containers, spooning it into the customers' bowls. Since he usually plies the same neighborhood for years, his regular customers *(suki)* become friends, as do their children, whom he can watch growing up into customers.

A recent escalation of this type is the vendor on a bicycle. One parked at the domestic airport has hot peanuts in the shell as a main product, and beside it peeled green mangoes skewered on sticks, and kept fresh in jars of water, with the *bagoong*-to-go ready in plastic jars. The most recent development is the bicycle equipped with a compartmented, glass-fronted, showcase with 18-24 fruits or nuts preserved Chinese-style. The bicycle man weaves through the streets of Manila and Tacloban, then parks at a school or streetcorner and unfurls its built-in umbrella.

The Sitting Vendors. Outside homes in residential areas sometimes sit solitary vendors — housewives, household help, or children — offering baskets or trays of home products: rice cakes, skewered syrup-coated bananas or sweet potatoes *(banana-cue; camote-cue)*, even chicken or pork barbecue browning on small charcoal grills, and *halo-halo* makings. These are by-products of the household, and are offered to neighbors, passersby, children coming home from school. Sales are not actively pressed, since whatever is left over can be consumed by the household.

In residential areas farther from urban activity, especially those in the provinces (e.g. Davao City), these tables may hold one or two covered pots *(caldero)* and thus be mini-*carinderias* or restaurants. The carinderia is usually found in markets and at bus or jeepney stops, and is marked by a row of calderos (two to twelve or more). The customer peers into the pots, chooses, and is served; he sits at and eats on the area beside the pots. The mini-carinderias sell home cooking, the day's menu, or the housewife's specialties, and thus earn enough to subsidize the household food bill.

Also sitting, but more active, and sometimes actually hawking their wares, are the women who sit outside moviehouses beside baskets of peanuts (boiled in the shell; fried with garlic), corn-nips (kernels fried with garlic and/or chili), green mangoes sometimes on skewers, fruits in season. Still others set up tables on sidewalks outside stores, restaurants, drugstores, etc. and offer *suman*, fruits, barbecue, *balut*.

Market and Churchyard Food. Although markets have food stalls inside and on the periphery, with the sellers and buyers as their customers, there is as well a proliferation of food in the streets surrounding — in carts, on tables, in baskets and boxes, aluminum and plastic cans and basins. Early in the morning, these are usually filled with breakfast food: hot cakes and fritters frying on hot plates or in woks on wheeled carts; doughnuts, rolls, bread, cakes; *suman, bibingka, kutsinta, puto, tamales* — rice cakes of many persuasions — and other less common regional specialties like *budbod kabug* (millet cakes), *ube* cakes, and *puto maya*, sweetened rice cooked with coconut milk and spooned out of the basket, wrapped in banana leaf for each customer.

The churchyard before and after Sunday masses, or on days when there are special devotions, is also crowded with vendors,

although in less variety than in the markets. A large part of the Christmas expectation and nostalgia is based on the fragrant steaming *bibingka* and hot *salabat* (ginger tea) awaiting those who attend the dawn masses. Churchyards and markets are the places in which to find provincial delicacies remembered, those no longer made in one's own or in modern kitchens, or requiring ingredients and methods now found only in the provinces.

The market foods progress with the day, since breakfast goods (including coffee, tea or chocolate) are replaced by snacks (fruits, fritters, crackling, pizza, peanuts, ice cream, cold drinks, etc.), then lunchtime fare (noodles, porridge/gruel, fish and meat dishes with and without broth), and more snacks until the market closes. The market is truly a center for food: raw and cooked, carinderia and street.

After the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo (June 1991), rehabilitation was first measurable in the markets. In San Marcelino, Zambales, three weeks after, only one table was in business, offering soft drinks, biscuits and cigarettes. In Subic (where the U.S. Naval Base was located) the market, deep in volcanic ash, had a few stalls open, and some snacks were being sold from baskets in the streets. The Olongapo Public market, on the other hand, had reopened and was doing business as usual in spite of the ash-muddied roads, with most customers wearing masks and handkerchiefs over their noses.

It is almost impossible to enumerate all the foods one can find in markets — to eat right there, or to take home. It provides an inventory of the major types of Filipino fare — especially the more portable kinds. At the provincial *tabu* or *tiangge* — the transient early morning markets at which farmers and fishermen sell produce and catch, and buy household necessities, one can see the range and richness of regional and indigenous food. At the large city markets, one finds the food that has long disappeared from households (too difficult to get; too long to cook) and has never made it to restaurant menus (too "ordinary" or commonplace; too much like home cooking). All markets are indexes of both street and household cuisine.

School Street Food. Outside every elementary and high school, vendors cluster, purveying food children like to buy at recess time and after school, pushing carts ingeniously designed for their goods.

The sellers of boiled corn have baskets lined with cloth and plastic (to keep the corn warm) mounted on carts, with containers for the husks, hangers for the forks with which to show the customer how good the ear is, and compartments for plastic bags.

Those who sell "ice-drops" (fruit-flavored popsicles) and ice cream have carts with insulated wells for the popsicles or the different ice cream flavors, and containers for cones and bread (for "ice cream sandwiches"). Playful, with folk colors and designs are those that sell "dirty" ice-cream — so called by generations of children whose mothers told them: "Don't buy ice cream from those carts; it's dirty" — and who bought it anyway, because of the unusual flavors (corn, *ube*, cheese) and the minimal prices. Less colorful, but safer and more pleasing to mothers are the "establishment" ice-creams like Magnolia, made by the largest Philippine food corporation.

The vendors of "ice-scramble" install ice-graters cranked by hand, containers for shaved ice, and for the colored syrups. The fishball carts have woks sitting on gas burners, stands for the fishballs on skewers, and a special compartment holding bottles of dipping sauces — with and without chili. Some have roofs, others have umbrellas. The vendors fry, or skewer-and-fry as one orders, and one dips into the *sawsawan* while standing around, or before walking away. Although many vendors make their own goods (rice cakes, ice cream), the fishballs are made wholesale in Chinatown or in markets (with shark meat, it is rumored), and the vendor's creativity is limited to the creation of his sawsawan.

Food at Office, Factory and Construction Sites. As soon as ground is broken for a building, food vendors appear. Some set up semi-permanent stalls that serve meals to workers until the construction is completed. Others appear at meal and snack times, as they do at break and going-home times at factories.

A special variant of street food has appeared in urban Makati. The office buildings that face Ayala Avenue, the prime location, constitute what has been called Manila's Wall Street. Their glass, steel and concrete facades remind one of any big city in the world. Behind many of them, however, at lunchtime, gather food vendors — motorized this time. There are jeepneys or small vans, from the back of which one can buy sandwiches, Chinese dumplings (*siomai*), steamed filled Chinese bread (*siopao*), noodles, cookies,

fruits. There are even vans or kombis from which one can buy rice, soup, various lunch dishes — all in plastic bags. This street food is not, however, eaten on the busy Makati streets, but taken up the building to one's desk.

The Transportation Center. The transportation hub, where hungry travellers come and go, is one of the prime centers for street food. At every stop bus passengers do not need to get off to get something to eat, since vendors push their baskets and wares into the windows, or get on the bus nimbly (avoiding the bus conductors who would shoo them out) to offer sweet rolls, hard-boiled eggs, packaged chips and such — and the specialties of the town. Thus one could do a survey of regional specialties from a bus window, e.g.: *ensaimada* at Malolos, Bulacan; *puto* at Biñan, Laguna; *tupig* in the Ilocos provinces; *bukayo* in the Pangasinan towns; pili candies in Bikol; *chicharron* at Baliwag, etc., on through Luzon, the Visayas, and Mindanao.

At the large urban centers like Cebu City, Davao City, and in Manila, Quiapo and Cubao, there is street food round the clock. At Cubao, for example, bus, jeepney, tricycle and pedestrian traffic converge and criss-cross, and a plethora of street food keeps everyone fed at any time of the day.

From about 4 to 10 p.m., the merienda and going-home crowd are the customers. Right on EDSA, a principal highway, at the Farmer's Market, where buses disgorge and load passengers, vendors stand on the street, near rows of edibles on the sidewalk: varicolored iced drinks faintly flavored with pineapple, coconut and strawberry; green mangoes fresh-peeled per customer, to dip in salt or *bagoong*; peanuts boiled or fried; whole peeled, or sliced fresh pineapple in plastic bags; and especially *balut* and barbecue, which deserve and will be given special attention.

As one turns the corner into Aurora Boulevard, the main artery of Cubao, the barbecue stands parade and proliferate, along with fruit (apples, oranges, native fruit in season) and snack stalls. One turns a corner into a side street where buses load up, and finds large wheeled carts serving as mini-restaurants. Couples preside over large pots of chicken or tripe porridge *(arroz caldo; goto)*; and three or four people sit on the bench facing, with the cart as table. Dishes are washed in pails and basins on the sidewalk.

There used to be as well pushcart restaurants that would roll up, and unload on the sidewalk tables, benches, plates, gas stove, washing paraphernalia, and small display stand for noodles, *adobo*, fried fish, rice, and other dishes. For a few hours they would be sidewalk restaurants, then would load up and roll away into the night. Although the practice has passed in Cubao, they still exist elsewhere.

This operation goes on till 10 or 11, at which time "dining" ends, and the carts are supposed to be wheeled home. Actually, they are pushed a block or two away, where they "park" away from the eyes of the police, to return the next day. These carts have permits from City Hall, or, in the provinces, what are called "tickets," signifying payment made to market, *barangay*, or police authorities, but they are often harassed for bribe money (as all vendors are). Regulations require that they have wheels, to indicate that they are not to stay, but some do stay, some make only token moves, and others have stayed on so long that their wheels have rotted and are no longer usable.

From 10 or 11 to 4 a.m. comes the midnight shift, and from 4 to about 11 the breakfast shift — other carts, serving perhaps porridge, but also boiled eggs, perhaps fried soy bean curd, coffee, sometimes noodles. "We have to have wheels; we have to leave to give way to others," said a vendor. "We also get harassed by the police, even taken to City Hall. But we pay up and return; this is the only way we know to earn a living."

The daytime shift sells mostly snacks; at 4 the heavy selling begins all over again.

Barbecue. Skewered chicken and pork barbecue are a special feature of the afternoon-to-evening shifts. In the 1950s only chicken legs, thighs and breasts, and pork chunks used to be barbecued. In the economic crisis of the 70s, however, almost every part of the pig and chicken came to be used: pigs' ears and intestines; chicken wings, necks, feet, heads, tails, combs, even intestines, meticulously cleaned and looped on thin skewers.

These came to have "pop" names spontaneously given by buyers and sellers, which journalists and their readers (especially those who never ate in the streets) found intensely amusing: *Adidas* (the shoe brand) for chicken feet; *PAL* (Philippine Air Lines) for wings; Walkman (the audiocassette recorder with earphones) for

pigs' ears; *helmet* for cocks' combs; IUD for the chicken intestines (because that is what they looked like).

The stands in rows, each with piles of ready, half-cooked, skewered parts, a grill with live coal on which to roast them when purchased, and a row of bottles of dipping sauces (sour, sweet-sour, hot), are each manned (or womanned) by one person who cooks (heats and browns), fans the coals to keep them alive, sells, and makes change — all in a haze of smoke that wafts the flavors along the street and entices customers. This community, barbecue country indeed, is echoed in miniature on smaller streets, in residential areas, alongside markets, etc.

The Balut Vendor. This deserves a separate category, although *balut* is sold all the time and everywhere — on streets, at stalls, outside movie houses, outside nightclubs and discos, in markets; by vendors walking, sitting, or squatting; at midnight and early dawn, at breakfast, lunch, merienda and dinner time. My first introduction to the sounds of Manila as a student, was being wakened by the early morning vendor calling "Baluu-u-u-ut" along Mayhaligue Street in Sta. Cruz.

Balut is a fertilized duck's egg, boiled, and eaten by cracking the wide end, making a hole, sprinkling in a little salt, sipping the broth, and then cracking the whole open to savor the red yolk and the tiny chick inside. The perfect balut, to the Filipino, is 17 days old, at which stage the chick is still wrapped in white *(balut sa puti)*, and does not show beak or feathers (Vietnamese and Chinese like their balut older, the chick larger). A Pateros balut-maker explains that the best specimens are sold to his special customers, who become connoisseurs and will have nothing older or younger than perfection. (In the U.S. it is usually sold at 16 days, so as to be less threatening to those unused to this cultural experience.) Older specimens (the balut continue to grow until boiled) are sold to ambulant night-time vendors, whose customers are not so particular or steady, and the 19-day holdovers (chicks almost ready to hatch) are sold only by bus terminal vendors, who will never see their customers again, will not hear recriminations, or form friendships with them.

Balut is popularly believed to be an aphrodisiac, or at least to have invigorating powers, and so is sold even in the late evenings and early mornings. It is always carried around in padded

baskets, so that the eggs are kept warm, and the seller supplies as well rock salt in little twists of paper, and chili-flavored vinegar, if desired.

Some years back one vendor in Cubao started to sell fried balut. These were cracked eggs, which couldn't be sold as balut, since the broth had seeped out. She peeled them, rolled them in flour, fried them in her cart, and served them in bowls with a little salt, vinegar and chili. Now the fried balut or *penoy* (the unfertilized egg) are the current fad: rolled in orange-colored batter, fried, and sold all over Cubao; eaten from the little bowls, while standing up and fine-tuning the flavor to one's taste by adding condiments.

Somewhat related to balut is the day-old chick. Poultries only keep female chicks to grow into fryers; male chicks used to be dumped into the sea — until someone fried them whole, into what is sometimes called "super-chicks" or "Day-O." These too are sold in streets and carts — and at beer places, as *pulutan*.

Balut is, as poet Tom Agulto says, deeply imbedded in Philippine food culture. It is practical, inexpensive, nutritious, and available in all seasons. Prices change only slightly according to place and time. "One can call it," he believes, "the national street food of the Philippines."

Reasons for Street Food. It obviously fills a need. In a country where the restaurant tradition is young, and the economic conditions are poor, public eating is done on the streets. Street food is for workers or passersby who cannot afford restaurants, or to go home to eat. It is for the traveller, the wanderer, the worker who keeps odd hours or has no food waiting at home; for schoolchildren who have only 15-minute class breaks; for the husband or wife who does not want to go home empty-handed, or has no time to create home-cooked meals.

The Economic Factor. Of the factors that make street food a lifestyle in the Philippines, the most visible one is economic. A street food operation is a small, fast, cash operation. A rice-cake seller in Hagonoy, Bulacan, for example, invests P250-P300 in the materials for a day's sale, and makes it all back by the afternoon, with about P100 profit, and with the family fed with some of his/her wares. A two-caldero carinderia in front of a Davao home

supplies the day's meals for the family, enough cash profit for the next day's capital, and a little extra.

No credit is needed; no credit is given. Manpower needs are minimal and family-contained; the only skills required are those of cooking and selling (although the designing and building of carts demonstrates considerable skill and flair), and these are acquired without formal education. It is a day-to-day, cash-to-cash, person-to-person, small enterprise suitable for developing countries like the Philippines, in which a large portion of the population is below the poverty line, and constitutes the potential sellers and buyers of street food.

The Cultural Factors. One cultural factor operating in the street food phenomenon is the Filipino idea of a meal. The Filipino meal is named according to the time of the day in which it is taken: *agahan* for *umaga*, morning; *tanghalian* for *tanghali*, noontime; *hapunan* for *hapon*, afternoon/evening. Each meal has considerable leeway of time, and also of space — home, in which there was no special room for dining; field or forest, to which one carried food — and of character. (*Adobo* or *pancit* are breakfast, lunch, dinner, and *merienda* food; few dishes are bound to particular meals.)

This makes food out in the open, in the market or street or field, not unusual or strange, not at odds with the meal indoors or at home. And if the home meal can be extended to the street, so certainly can the restaurant meal. (One of the more popular restaurants for taxi drivers in Quezon City is under a tree, from which hang bunches of bananas for dessert.) Most Filipinos are therefore quite comfortable with street food — except perhaps those who have been brought up with strict Western ideas about propriety of place and strictness of sanitation.

There is, of course, a concept of meals as stopping points, as landmarks of the day. Major meals are necessary to ease or to prevent hunger, but between them one may eat to "tide over" hunger: *pantawid gutom*, literally to "cross over" between hungers, to bridge them. The snacks on the street fill this function, and perhaps that is why they are not considered "serious" meals and are given "unserious" names like Adidas, helmet and Walkman.

The Filipino idea of community may also explain why meals outdoors, in the streets, among strangers, are comfortable. In the

basic agricultural and riverine communities in which Philippine culture developed, there was a dependence among members of a community — for the plowing and planting of fields, for the mending or setting of nets, for harvesting and winnowing. The family groupings became communities; the communities felt like families. The homes extended to the streets, where could be found the space in which to sit and chat with neighbors, to play games, to dry *palay*, to mend fishnets, to work on pots and baskets, to eat and celebrate. At some fiestas even today, tables are set up in the streets for everyone. Celebrations in small houses without backyards, extend frontward, to the street. Urban congestion and traffic may have eliminated this in cities, but the spirit often remains, and there is a congeniality among the vendors and consumers of street food that suggests rootedness in earlier times.

The process of producing and selling food seems to have begun in the *tabu*, the transient, evanescent early morning market on streets and at crossings, to which one brought what one grew, caught, made, or cooked. The sellers were all ambulant, without permanent stalls, and brought their goods in baskets and pots, on foot or in carts or on horseback. Chinese traders brought their "imported" goods, or their cooking, which rapidly became indigenized. This seems to be where street food began — and continued (and continues, in the provinces), thus filling the spaces consecrated by the culture as communal.

Street food in the Philippines is thus not only a convenience for busy working people with no time to cook, or an economic phenomenon for hard times in a developing country. It is also and especially a communal gathering rooted in a sense of the street as communal space, in an understanding of meals as movable in time, as flexible feasts that make their own spaces and shape their own meanings — in home or village or street.

Here's to Spirited Holidays

True celebration is of the spirit, and needs no spirits to make it lively. Wines and spirits, however, because of their mystique, history, and alcohol content, do have an effect on body and mind, and produce a feeling of exhilaration and lightness, which can make the spirit rise and fly.

Here in the Philippines, many have a tendency to call anything with alcohol content "alak," our generic name for wine, liquor, distillates, alcohol. Thus there is *alak sa niyog*, coconut wine like *lambanog; alak sa sasa*, nipa wine like *laksoy; alak sa tubo*, sugarcane wine like *basi; alak sa sintunes* or citrus/orange wine; and *alak sa ubas*, grape wine. *Uminom ng alak* is to drink any of the above and other drinks like *tapuy*, the rice wine of the Cordilleras, *tuba* young or old *(bahal)*, whiskey, champagne, beer, *ginebra*, or even *sioctong*, the Chinese medicinal wine made from rice.

If one wishes to make distinctions, however, *wine* in the Occidental sense is the fermented juice of the grape. *Spirits* is the word used when distillation is involved, a process which removes a great deal of the liquid and leaves more of the potency (higher alcohol content). The products are brandy, gin, whisky, vodka and rum, and other "minor spirits" like the Balkan *raki* and Jamaican *arrack* (derived from the Arabic *arak*, kin to our *alak*), the Mexican *pulque* and *tequila*, *mahua* spirits made from flowers, and spirits made from other plants (e.g. the Ugandan *waragi* from bananas).

Liqueurs are sweetened, flavored, and often colored spirits, and are usually drunk after a meal, with coffee. Here belong Benedictine, Chartreuse (both made in monasteries), Cointreau, Creme de Cacao, Grand Marnier, Kirsch, Anisette, etc. — many with proprietary names of the inventors or manufacturers, and

having secret recipes. Absinthe belongs here too. It is legendary because often associated with a go-for-broke, till-we-die, cutting-edge kind of drinking, probably because it is flavoured with oil of wormwood (and also angelica, aniseed, cinnamon, cloves, etc.), which suggests bitterness and repentance. Absinthe is chiefly made in France, and its manufacture is forbidden in Switzerland.

With all that history and technological evolution, spirits very often figure in ritual and medicine, and in celebration. Wine is drunk even on ordinary days, of course, and taken with meals in many Western cultures, but it remains special and connected with special occasions.

In the Philippines, we especially connect it with the holidays: brandy, whisky and rum in the fruitcakes we adapted from the American tradition; *tinto, vino blanco, sidra,* and *champan* with the food we learned from the Spanish tradition. Most of us have not quite connected the above with our own tradition of wines from the native environment: the *basing lalake* and *basing babae* from sugarcane, the *tapuy* and *baya* from rice, the *tuba* and *lambanog* from coconut sap, and the growing varieties of wines from our fruits (*duhat, bignay,* etc.).

A very interesting little blue book makes the link: *Wines, Liquors and Similar Products* written in 1962 by Jose M. Mendoza. The tiny blurb tells us that Prof. Mendoza has a BSA from Oregon State College and MA/MS degrees from the University of Illinois; was formerly a scientist (Mycologist, Microbiologist) with the Bureau of Science, the National Museum and the Department of Health, and was professor in Industrial Microbiology, Food Technology and Fermentation Technology at the MLQ University.

After a classification of wines of foreign origin into dry, sweet and sparkling, with subclassifications, Mendoza has a chapter on Philippine wines. Since grapes are only beginning to be grown in the Philippines, and we cannot have the "great grapes" that make great wines, we must hark to Mendoza. The nature of Philippine fruits, he writes, is different from that of the grape. They are of low sugar content, many do not contain natural yeast unlike grapes, and Philippine fruits differ from each other in physical characteristics.

"The casoy is pulpy and contains less sugar; the duhat is large-seeded and less pulpy; the guava is heavily seeded; the bignay is seeded with less sugar; and the pineapple is juicy but fibrous."

They are all capable of yielding juice that can be fermented into wine, but have to be treated differently, each according to its nature. This scientist gives precise and scientific instructions (with sketches), adding to the above such fruits as balimbing, chico and mango. Considering the wealth of Philippine pulpy fruits, we can generate a whole line of fruit wines that could stun the world — all of them, however, sweet wines that go with dessert (after dinner), not dry wines that might go with the meal.

BASI, writes Mendoza, is a fermented wine not made from fruit, but from juice in sugar cane regions in the Ilocos. A special sugar cane planted for this purpose is milled in the field called *bangkag* in wooden mills driven by carabao power. The juice is boiled in *kawa*, placed in earthen *burnay*, then mixed with dried leaves, flowers, bark and twigs of a tree called *samak (Macaranga tenarius)*. The mixture is inoculated with a homemade yeast called *bubud* (*galapong*, water, ginger, sugar and chopped *siling labuyo*). The result: *basing babai* (a fermentation that has failed, with a considerable amount of sugar remaining in the wine), and *basing lalaki* (fermentation completed, therefore drier, and higher in alcohol content).

LAMBANOG and LAKSOY are both distilled wines, one from coconut sap, the other from nipa sap. For *lambanog*, the sap is collected as for *tuba*; fermentation takes only a couple of hours, being spontaneous. Allowing it to continue beyond this period produces vinegar. Distillation is done after this period, in a simple kiln or stove with a large opening on top where a *kawa* is placed, over it a tank, and over this another *kawa*. Boiling makes the steam rise, get in contact with the kettle on top containing cold water, and condensation takes place. The sweat formed drops down, and is collected and condensed into lambanog.

The making of *laksoy* in Butuan has been described by Eddy Alegre (*Inumang Pinoy*, 1992): the sap is collected from the nipa fruit and distilled in a still made of a *karaha* over an inverted cone over a claystove. Here the juice boils, condenses, liquefies, then passes out through a tube to drip into gallon-sized bottles. The result: a *laksoy* which flames like good brandy, and if aged for two years is "incomparable in smoothness." It is sometimes flavored with *langka* and/or raisins for aroma, and potato (raw, peeled, sliced) to absorb the roughness. It is also used as *haplos* (e.g. by karatekas), and taken as medicine.

Let us not look down upon the crude-seeming stills. They work, and Mendoza writes that the "moonshiners" are such experts that they "know the point which gives about 40 percent alcohol by volume." Laksoy has been "reported in Spanish accounts from as early as the 16th century," and was made into communion wine (tamed and flavored with apples and duhat).

We do have, therefore, a tradition of wines and spirits in our history and culture. So why not use them to celebrate the New Year with? I suggest and foresee experimentation: lambanog or laksoy in fruitcakes with our dried and glazed langka, papaya, mangoes, and nuts like pili and kasuy; basing lalake at diplomatic receptions; *baya* (high-grade tapuy) to toast brides and grooms; *duhat* or *bignay* wine to go with dessert; and *tapuy* (already served at the Cafe by the Ruins, Baguio City) to bring the inner fire and cheer that we all need for the new year, and the peace we wish and must work for.

Breaking the Fast

The aroma of fresh-brewed coffee, the smell of crisping bacon, the sound and scent ot *sinangag* frying in a *carajay* — breakfast lures one into waking. A pity that most people have to rush through it, trying to read the papers, get food into the stomach, organize the mind, feed and dress the children, and get the show on the road, all at the same time. Wouldn't it be ideal if breakfast could be a time of waking body and mind slowly, gloriously, luxuriously — to sunset and food, to workday and life? We all have had breakfasts like that — alas too few and too rarely.

Once many years ago, in Elsa Viterbo's beach house in Roxas City, we rose to breakfast of *sinangag* and small freshly-caught shrimps, briefly cooked and tasting of sea and summer. Another time on another beach, in Batangas, the morning aroma was of sausages and eggs being orchestrated by Marcelo Fernando — after Gilda and I had already been to the dawn market in a tricycle. Perhaps one does have to get away from the city and the workaday to have breakfasts that sing the morning awake.

The word *breakfast* indicates the purpose of the meal — to break the fast of evening, to start the body going. Perhaps this is what makes the American breakfast different in content from lunch, supper and dinner. Because of its unique purpose, it is unique. The classic ingredients are fruit juice — often OJ, or orange juice — or fruit like grapefruit. Then eggs scrambled or fried or poached, and an accompanying meat dish, usually bacon, ham, sausages, or corned beef hash. Buns or toast or muffins or Danish; French toast or waffles or pancakes. Jam and marmalade; honey and butter. Cereal with milk and sugar, even with fruit. And of course coffee or tea. The pattern is set, traditional, and assigned to breakfast.

It is a good breakfast, and some of the best meals I have had in the U.S. have been breakfasts — in hotel dining rooms, or friends' homes, or tiny roadside diners. The day is fresh and hopeful; the spirit is upbeat, the food tastes good, life is beginning again.

The Continental breakfast of croissants or rolls, marmalade and butter, coffee and cream is gentler, more "softspoken" (bacon and sausages speak out), good for milder appetites, suitable for breakfast in bed, with a rose on the tray. The British breakfast of kippered herring unsettles many who have never had fish for breakfast — but not Filipinos. They also have sausages, bacon, eggs — and sometimes fried bread. The Japanese breakfast of rice, fish, soup, and pickles is as aesthetically arranged as are all other Japanese meals. The Chinese breakfast of *congee* or *lugaw* with, in Canton, chicken, pork or fish already cooked into it (like our *arroz caldo*, which is derived from it), or in other regions, many accompaniments to sprinkle or mix into it — meats, pickles, cut-up eggs, nuts, etc. — is soothing and simple. So are the dumplings and such, with tea.

The traditional Filipino breakfast, however, is different from all of the above in that it is not too different from lunch and dinner, and therefore more than a breaker of fasting, being rather a real beginning. Notice that it begins with rice, as all our other meals do. But here the rice is that left over from the night before, moistened, fried with garlic. This may have started as a time-saver and a waste-preventive. Since breakfast can be had as early as 4 a.m., using leftover rice saves someone from getting up at 3:00 to cook a fresh pot. If it started as a practical measure, it produced a special treat — *sinangag* is something to look forward to, rice of a different flavor and aroma, of a special morning goodness.

With the *sinangag* comes easy-to-cook accompaniments — *daing* or *tuyo* perhaps, fish already dried and salted, ready to the hand, requiring no long preparation. Or perhaps *tinapa*, or the other special kinds of salted or preserved fish available through the islands — tiny boneless *danggit* in Cebu; in Negros *binuro*, fish buried in rock salt, and cooked with vinegar. My father's favorite breakfast used to be a plate of rice, scrambled eggs mixed in, binuro broth sprinkled over, and bits of the succulent, salty fish. Or tiny shrimps cooked in garlic or, in some places, coconut milk. Or *tapa* — pork, beef, venison, wild boar. Or the sweetish *tocino*; or the *longanisas* of many persuasions that come out of our towns and

regions — *hamonado, de recado*, pork or beef or chicken, in casing or *hubad*, chunky and flavored with laurel as in Lucban or spicy in other ways. Eggs may be fried or scrambled, but also salted and sliced, or sautéed with onions and tomatoes. The traditional breakfast foods, however, are not necessarily assigned only to breakfasts. Witness the proliferation of *tapsi-tapsilog* places that are open, indeed jammed for lunch, supper, merienda, and after-hour snacks.

But then breakfast is not limited to the above either, because of course one can have last night's *paksiw*, which is excellent hot or cold, and indeed gets better as it steeps in the sour broth. (The wisdom of native cooking: *paksiw* keeps without refrigeration and "ages" with grace.) Or the *adobo* in the pot — or whatever else was left over, transformed or untransformed.

At 5:30 on Easter morning one year, we drove to Angono to watch the lovely *Salubong*. This occurs all over the Philippines, of course — that year even in Forbes Park, where a metal structure was set up in front of San Antonio Church. But in Angono it has been done from time immemorial in the same artistic manner. The statues of Mary in mourning veil, and the Risen Christ leave the church after Mass and take different routes to the site set up in an empty lot near the town market. (Some years back it was in front of the *municipio*, but crowds have grown immensely since then.) Christ is accompanied by the male saints; Mary by Cleofe, Salome, and Magdalena. All are borne on *andas* on men's shoulders.

The meeting takes place beneath the *galilea*, a structure of bamboo and palm fronds, in the center of which dangles the *puso*, decorated with paper cutouts and trim, in which a little girl-angel waits. The little girl has been chosen (auditioned by Prof. Lucio San Pedro) not only for her courage (she dangles above the heads of the crowd while waiting for the *salubong*) but for her singing voice. When the statues come together -- Christ and Mary in center, the rest in the periphery — a *Capitana* performs a courtly gavotte with a flag. The music she dances to was composed by Prof. San Pedro on March 17, 1964, an Easter gift to his son. Then a *Tenienta* declaims a poem to the Virgin in the traditional manner, hand gestures and all. (Both Capitana and Tenienta are chosen by raffle from among the pretty candidates presented by the different barrios).

At a cue in the poem birds of wood and paper swoop down on the *puso* and open its "petals" to reveal the angel. Two other birds hover over the crowd and scatter lucky confetti that sprinkle

the band, the people, our handbags and cameras. The angel descends, removes the mourning veil from the Virgin, and sings "Regina Coeli" -- time to end mourning and rejoice.

Throughout, beneath and beyond, one feels the heart of Angono beating: beating in the children creeping under the stage and edging up to get a closer look; in the band members, the priests, the conductors, the altar boys, all playing their parts with smiles on their faces; in the audience of parents, grandparents, teenagers, market vendors. The people are proud and pleased, and not blasé about the yearly spectacle. We visitors relished not only spectacle and the ingenious craftmanship (the same family has traditionally done the pulley-manipulated birds, and the names of the children who helped make them are emblazoned on them), but the spirit of a town, which has not become stale through modernization and media and time passing.

In the same spirit was the breakfast served by Perdigon and Luz Vocalan at Balaw-Balaw. A large decorated *palayok* was filled with *bachoy* -- and chunks of pork and liver, *patola* slices and spices. A *bilao* bore crisply crumbling roasted dried squid, with sliced tomatoes and onions. Another offered *kare-kareng kanduli*, split, salted and skewered. There was *paksiw na kanduli*, flavored with lots of crushed *dilao*. *Tapang usa*. Salted eggs and tomatoes. A hearty *palayok* of *sinangag*, a large *suman*, native coffee.

How perfect it all was after the 5:30 a.m. drive down the quiet highways, the thrill of the *salubong*, the pleasant tiredness of having jostled crowds, photographed local folk art, and been on one's feet for a couple of hours. The leisurely pace of breakfast, the absence of newspapers that one felt impelled to read, the time to savor each dish, and even return to one's particular favorities, and to chat easily with friends, all were an Easter morning blessing.

Even though the Filipino breakfast is not much different from the other meals, it is called *agahan* because it is for the morning. It gives strength for the day's work (often very hard, since the majority of our people work the fields and seas); it thriftily uses up food left over or preserved long before; it brings the family together at the start of another communal day; it opens the morning in grace and togetherness.

Sukang Paombong

Vinegar has been one of our pressing current concerns, first because of our book on *kinilaw* (1991); then because of the scarcity of the famous native vinegars (Sukang Iloko, Sukang Paombong, etc.) in the city, and, rumor says, even in the provinces; thirdly because vinegar manufacturers tell horror stories of adulteration in both cities and provinces, such that some vinegars are pure acetic acid.

Most people know that *kinilaw* is very fresh raw fish dressed with vinegar, salt, pepper, ginger and onions, and that the translucent flesh is thus "cooked" by the acid ("sour power" we called it in the book) and transformed into the very next stage, just after raw freshness. Others know that some Southern American countries have a similar dish, called *ceviche*, often dressed with lime juice. Few know, however, how many subtle nuances, and what a wide range of fish, seafood, meat, condiments and good native vinegars combine and blend to make the many *kinilaw* of our islands.

The vinegar, which cooks as well as flavors the *kinilaw*, is obviously of paramount importance. Wanting to look into *sukang-Paombong*, which has been famous for decades, I called *kumpare*, award-winning poet and occasional fisherman Tom Agulto, whose home is in Hagonoy, Bulacan. His report is that of the consummate researcher, and undoubtedly that of a poet.

"Tata Aco", is what his *kababaryo* call Ciriaco Francisco (80 years old, of San Nicolas, Hagonoy, Bulacan who lives beside the river in a small house of nipa and bamboo. His house stands inside a stand of nipa palms *(sasa)*. He was born, became a young man, and grew old in Hagonoy, Bulacan, a town beside Paombong. Tata Aco knows well the process of making *sukang-Paombong* because it has been his livelihood for a long season.

The vinegar comes from the nipa fruit. This is tended by the *magtutuba* before it ripens, and while still on the branch *(buwig)* so that it will give juice -- by a process called *paguntag*. Tata Aco kicks *(inuuntag)* the branch 20 times once a week for six to seven weeks. He then cuts the fruit off (on the diagonal) and attaches a bamboo tube *(tukil)*. The tukil gets filled up after a day and night, and each morning tuba is poured off *(tinitigis)*, the tukil scraped with a knife *(karit)*, but not washed. The buwig gives juice for about three months before dying. Different kinds of ants -- black and red -- kill the buwig by sucking at it till it dries.

The tuba is then stored in covered clay jars, exposed to the sun. Nothing is added, and the tuba turns to vinegar in a week. This pure vinegar lasts for five months to a year. It is white at the start, but as it sours further, it darkens and becomes brownish, like the earth.

Other products from the nipa palm are: 1) *walis tingting* (from the leaf midrib); 2) *pawid* or roofing material, and 3) *samid* (like *sawali*) or walling material. From the juice come tuba, vinegar, and *tinamis* -- the first sweet juice, boiled till thick like *pulot*. The fruit is eaten; it is white and like *kaong*.

"Current [1991] prices are: P10 for a long-neck bottle of tuba, and P11 for suka; P50 for a gallon of tuba, and P60 for suka. Ordinarily the magtutuba himself delivers the vinegar to his own *suki*, apportioning it to stores in the barrio, in town, and even sending it outside -- to Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Tarlac, and Manila. Since there are now so few who still tend nipa palms for tuba and vinegar, the sukang-Paombong sold in stores is probably adulterated by the merchants or suppliers."

Tom tells of Dr. Alipio D. Roque, who says that it is not for medicinal reasons that he sells the vinegar alongside his pills and tonics, but because he is proud to be known as a supplier of the real, unadulterated product. He admits, however, that some people use the vinegar to ease colds.

So that I could see all this for myself, Tom arranged an excursion. He loaded us into a boat, along with his wife Pinang and their three children Aga, Malay and Elena -- and a galaxy of pots and pails and plates. In the motorized banca of Ka Quino (Quirino Javier) we sailed past houses, trees, palms and vines, the salt water spraying us gently. We got off at a fishpond in Bongalon, Paombong, where Lolly Bartolome and her sister-in-law Viring Bartolome (they are married to brothers) were supervising the gathering of *bangus*.

We sat around chatting and munching on boiled peanuts till lunchtime. Two men went out to the pond -- "kumukuha ng ulam," is how they put it. They raised a net, and gathered a basinful of live, jumping shrimps. This went into the *sinigang* broth that Pinang had brought, already seasoned with *sampaloc*, already enriched with chili and vegetables. Some shrimps were skewered and roasted on the fire, emerging so crisp that one could (I did, anyway) eat them tail, skin, head, whiskers and all.

Pinang had also brought bangus stuffed with onions and tomatoes, wrapped in banana leaves and roasted by a neighbor. Also two pots of *laing*, one very hot and the other quite mild. There was newly-harvested *wagwag* rice cooked with *pandan*. Also homemade *ampalaya* and *talong* pickles.

Sitting there in the nipa hut, our table two ice chests (for the bangus) put together, our food just plucked from sea, pond, and garden, we felt a strong sense of well-being, of having ingested health and truth from the benevolent countryside.

After lunch Tom and Ka Quino took me and the two boys into the nipa swamps nearby. We walked along the dike dividing ponds, and where there were breaks, crossed on single-bamboo bridges. Tom and Ka Quino, both fishermen, walked and the boys pranced across as if these were pontoons. I, awkward landlubber, teetered and balanced, and was looked after with great kindness and concern.

There I saw all the stages of sukang-Paombong: The *puso* or flower preceding the fruit; the fruit on the branch which was receiving *untag* treatment; the *tukil* attached to the branch, with the juice dripping in and producing a little foam. And finally two men in a banca carrying away filled five-gallon containers of tuba, which we tasted and found sweet and slightly heady. We sailed home past houses with their small yards crowded with clay jars in which tuba was self-transforming into the famous suka.

"In Paombong and Hagonoy," Tom's report ends, "the people are still proud to give sukang-Paombong as gifts to special friends and to relatives."

"Ang sukang-Paombong ay isang maasim na ala-ala sa matamis na pagsasama." (Sukang-Paombong is a sour remembrance of a sweet sharing.)

Balut, Kamaru, Sawa: What Exotica Do You Eat?

When we were teaching in Ohio University in 1983, Tish Bautista of De La Salle and I decided to give our students (her course was Tagalog; mine was Philippine history and culture) an actual taste of the culture by having a *balut* party. "A cultural experience," we called it, telling our students that they had to savor the culture as well as study and talk about it.

It was not difficult to find *balut*; Filipinos in Columbus, Ohio, were making it from ducks' eggs, and it was a best seller at Filipino-American gatherings. It was usually 16-day *balut*, however, rather than 17-day, because a very small *sisiw* was much more acceptable to Americans.

Those of our students who had been in the Philippines as Peace Corps volunteers cockily showed off their *savoir faire*, tapping the shell, sipping the broth, peeling and eating the exotica within. All shades of daring and reluctance showed on the faces of the others. Most upset was a mild young man who declared failure — he just could not eat the little animal that was the mascot of his fraternity!

What is Exotic?

Exotica is simply that which you are not used to eating, which was not in the daily fare of your childhood. Thus *balut* is exotica even to the Filipinos who do not eat it, like Visayans. At an Asian Studies Conference, again in Ohio, Kenneth Bauzon brought in a box of *balut* which we consumed in a small beer place one late night. Mike Cullinane of the U.S. ate it like an old hand; Joel Rocamora of Siquijor had to be taught to eat it because it was his first *balut* experience. Exotic too are the day-old chicks fried for *pulutan*, the chicken intestines barbecued and called *IUD*.

From this point of view, Filipinos do eat a lot of exotica, or items that others (read: Americans with whom we always compare ourselves because of the colonial experience) don't. "Anything that flies or moves," writes Gilda C. Fernando, "the rural Filipino quickly swats, cooks and eats. His catholic diet includes the pupa of honeybees, birds' nests, fresh-water beetles, sea urchins, lizards, iguanas, pythons, octopus, and field rats, all of which are described as 'very delicious -- tastes just like chicken.'"

There is of course the *kamaru*, the little mole crickets that are *adobado*, then fried in butter, and are crunchy on the outside, soft in the inside. Pampangos love it; it takes some adjustment for non-Pampangos, especially the Manila-bred, to learn to crunch insects in their mouths. In Negros we crunched locusts, which were pests as well as delicacy. I am told that the *salagubang*, picked in May and June and cooked, taste like creamy fresh roe.

The shipworm *(tamilok)* is "picked from *bakawan* driftwood in Agusan, Surigao and Davao. The wood is chopped up so that the worms, pink, six to eight inches long, may be extracted, washed a little, and deposited wriggling on one's tongue. The *tamilok*, its fans swear, has a fresh clean taste that sends shivers of pleasure down one's alimentary canal."

The coconut robber crab *(tatus, igud)*, having robbed coconuts all its life, cracking them open with claws said to be powerful enough to lift furniture, is large and ugly -- but delicious because the coconut diet gives it a delicious sauce. (It is available in season at the Seafood Market.) Turtle eggs and *bayawak* eggs are soft-shelled and delicious.

The *bayawak* is exotic if you have never tasted it. In Angono, Digon Vocalan gets it from those who trap it as it sneaks into poultries to get the chicken which is its favorite food. He serves it at *Balaw-Balaw* either *adobong matanda* (crisp, dry with plenty of toasted garlic) or *adobo sa gata*. It does indeed taste like chicken, except that it has a more intense taste and is less tender -- somewhat along the lines of other undomesticated animal fare, like *baboy damo* and *usa*. Wild animals, we must remember, are not fed by men and do not have the leisure to grow fat. That is part of the adventurousness of game.

Musang -- wild cat, civet cat -- is trapped, or baited with bananas, then cooked *kilawin* in vinegar. The fruit bat or *paniki* is said to be delicious because it feeds on such fruit as *lanzones* and

langka off the tree. The field or mountain rat has a diet of grain (not urban detritus), but we have never encountered anyone who could tell us where to get it, and how to be sure it truly came from fields and mountains.

Perhaps the most exotic animal I have personally sampled is the *sawa*, which the dictionary defines as both boa constrictor and python. At Balaw-Balaw, it was fried crisp with a lot of garlic, and though a bit tough, had a good flavor.

Ant eggs, said to be crisp/creamy, are favored in Ilocos Norte, where they are found conveniently "packaged" between large leaves or in clumps on certain trees.

If you have lived a sedate life eating meat from supermarket packages, then even goat -- *kilawin, papaitan* -- is exotic, and so is dog or *azucena*, and even *ulang* and *alupihang dagat*. Exotic is a way of seeing, and adventure is its other side.

How to Butcher Snake

Most Asian cuisines seem wildly adventurous because they do not have the Western inhibitions that we Filipinos have absorbed through our Americanization. Japanese introduced us to eating fish raw (in the 1950s there was one Japanese restaurant in Manila, and hardly anyone ate raw fish), and those who now know the pristine taste of *sashimi* also take to deliciously creamy sea urchins *(uni)* and fish roe *(ikura)*, in the raw. Still very rare, however, is the fan of *fugu*, or blowfish, which in Japan is prepared only by strictly licensed chefs. This is food with a dash of danger since a slight mistake can make the fish poisonous and deadly; some very famous people have died eating *fugu*.

Chinese cuisine is legendary for its adventure. In small markets in Kweilin I have seen sold alongside pork and chicken the meat of dogs, mountain rats, turtle and pangolin (ant-eater). I have tasted bears' paws -- rich and honey-sweet because the front paws are used to pick honeycombs off trees. I have not tasted monkeys' brains, which are said to be eaten quiveringly live from the cranium of the animal, caged beneath a special table.

We hear of snake being eaten, its bile used to flavor wine. In Hong Kong's South China Morning Post a letter to the editor by one Malcolm Quinn protested the cruelty of snakes being butchered on the pavement, with a crowd watching. How is it done? "First catch your snake . . . This is done by the snake shop maestro

plunging his hands into a wire cage of torpid snakes and grasping a victim tightly behind the head. This daring part of the act is much appreciated by the crowd who usually 'wah' at this point.

"In step two, the maestro puts a . . . boot on the tail of the snake and pins it by force to the pavement.

"Then with a flourish he produces a pair of pliers, levers open the snake's mouth, and proceeds to extract or break off the snake's fangs.

"In step three the snake's gall bladder is extracted . . . This is done by cutting a slit in the snake's side and groping for the bladder with two or three fingers. The successful extraction of the gall bladder is also accompanied by gasps of admiration from the onlookers.

"Step four is to skin the hapless snake alive. This is done by cutting around the neck and then slitting the skin from head to tail. The skin is then peeled off in one brutal and bloody movement.

"Finally the long delayed *coup de grace* is administered and the snake is decapitated. Anyone for snake soup?"

The undertone of horror and disgust comes from a contrasting culture in which snakes are not eaten -- but other animals are certainly drawn, quartered, skinned, eaten and stuffed. In other words, that which is not in your own culture always seems exotic, to put it kindly; barbaric, to put it bluntly.

Adventure and Discovery

Why do we Filipinos have so much "exotica" in our diet, then? Simply because we are an agricultural people, close to the fields, forests and streams from whence come the exotica. We know them, we know when and how they are edible; we consider them part of *biyaya ng lupa*; we gratefully consume them -- along with the more usual stuff like pigs and chickens and *kangkong*. As children, in fact, getting food (*salagubang*, stolen mangoes) is part of playing. As adults, getting free food from the fields and forests, in the right seasons (*kabuting kidlat, pako*, frogs and *ulang* in their special times) is part of survival and the grace of God.

"For the poor," writes Eddy Alegre in *Sarap*, "every little possibility helps." What is available, try. What is possible, explore. Availability and possibility are thus the grid of choices. Nutrition is not a consideration. Food should be filling. The stomach must not growl. One must have the energy for physical work.

"And the earth continues to replenish itself. Mole crickets, winged white ants, *salagubang* still abound in those first few days of the year's first rain. The rivers still have shrimps and crayfish; the streams, fish and shells . . . around . . . are possibilities seemingly endless . . . And motivation is not greed. It is survival . . .

"Seventy-six percent of Filipinos live below the poverty line, and it is they who do the trail-blazing for others like them, as well as for all the rest. They bring 'exotica' to our tables and new additions to our usual food fare . . . They can start fads, such as the *goto* a few years back. They make day-old chicks and chicken viscera ordinary. They expand our options. They are the true voyagers and explorers, and thus the true discoverers of our culinary world."

The Lumpia of Silay

Lumpia -- a mixture of vegetables and / or meats / seafood rolled up in a thin wrapper, and served with or without a sauce -- is a Southeast Asian phenomenon obviously derived from the Chinese spring roll. In Vietnam, the wrapper is a silky rice paper; in Singapore, the makings of *popiah* are laid out, and party guests concoct and wrap their own.

In the Philippines, lumpia is found "fresh" or uncooked *(sariwa)*: sautéed vegetables (e.g. *ubod, togue, garbansos, singkamas,* green beans) in a white flour-and-water wrapper, perhaps lined with a leaf of native lettuce. Or fried *(prito)* -- vegetables within, or pork as in lumpia Shanghai. Or unwrapped *(hubad)*, garnished with ground peanuts or a sauce.

In Silay City, Negros Occidental, however, it is always fresh as the morning -- the coconut tree cut down for ubod only hours before, so that the pith is sweet and white. (Small trees just for ubod are sometimes planted between rows of full-size nut-bearing trees.) The crunchy ubod is sautéed with pork and shrimps, and seasoned well with garlic, so that no sauce is needed. The wrapper (sometimes egg-yellow) is so thin it melts in the mouth, and a jaunty spring onion is tucked in for crunch and bite. It may be served with a drink called *"ensalada"* -- of coconut water, fruits, and ubod chopped fine. It is incomparable, and the stuff of which Silaynon memories are made.

Si Sugpo: Prawns in Philippine Lore and Culture

In Ilianen-Manobo folktale recorded and transcribed by Hazel Wrigglesworth in *An Anthology of Ilianen Manobo Folktales* (University of San Carlos, 1981) is entitled "Si Pelaas", or Lizard -- actually the *bayawak* (monitor lizard). It was told to her by Ampatuan Ampalid, son of a chief, who "often accompanied his father on his extensive case-settling trips so that he might enjoy the tale-telling sessions that were part of such gatherings." Here is the tale, retold and shortened.

There was, once upon a time, a Bayawak, whose best friend was a deer, and so close were they that "it was just the same as if [they] had been cut from the same umbilical cord." One day, Bayawak became pregnant, and Usa took care of her, looking for food daily and bringing it to her while she waited at home. Finally, Bayawak gave birth to several children, and remained at home looking after them, for Usa had become too busy to look after them.

When she was finally regaining her strength, she asked Usa one day to stay home and look after her children, because she felt sluggish, and wanted to go fishing. Usa agreed, and Bayawak dove into the river and caught a big shrimp. *"Ih,"* she said, "I am in good luck today," and went on fishing.

When he realized that someone was after him, Sugpo took to flight, churning up the water, with Bayawak chasing. Soon he bumped into a turtle, who decided to run too, because Sugpo, brandishing his spears (claws), seemed to be fleeing from danger. Pagong was seen by a crocodile, who said, *"Naku!* why is Pagong running, carrying her house on her back? Perhaps there is trouble." "What is going on, Pagong?" asked Buwaya, as the turtle passed.

"Don't detain me; there's trouble afoot. Sugpo is carrying his spears, and I don't know what he is running away from. I'm afraid of getting struck by his spears!" Pagong ran on, while Buwaya decided to come out of the water and spread his coat of armour out in the sun to dry -- to be prepared. Meanwhile the woodpecker, who lived in a hole in the tree, saw this, and thought there must be some trouble. So Batuktok sounded her gong, beating it loud.

Usa was awakened suddenly by the sound, and, startled, began moving around, and thus trod on all the children of Bayawak, who were thus killed while their mother was out fishing. When Usa realized what had happened, he too ran away.

Bayawak, meanwhile, unable to catch anything, went home and found her children dead. She set off to see the Datu, and made her complaint: "*Keretuan,* I've come because my children are all dead. I've come to ask you to help me catch Usa, for she is the one who killed all my children while I was out fishing." The Datu sent for Usa. "I didn't do it on purpose," said Usa. "When Batuktok suddenly beat her gong, I became frightened and accidentally trod on them."

Batuktok, called to report, explained that she had beat her gong to warn people that danger was approaching, because she'd seen Buwaya coming out of the water with his warrior's coat. Buwaya said that Pagong's hurrying by had impelled him to ready his warrior's coat, so as not to be killed. Pagong said she had run off carrying her house because Sugpo was carrying weapons -- two sharp spears -- and she was afraid she would be hit. Sugpo explained that he was escaping Bayawak, who was chasing him.

The Datu thought quietly for a while, then told Bayawak: "You have no one to blame but yourself, since you started it all. What happened is just like what happens when a bayawak has just been caught by a hunter. He bends its tail back to meet its mouth, and then he hangs the bayawak over his carrying pole by making its own tail serve as a means to carry it."

This type of tale is called by folklorists "Trial Among the Animals," and its theme is "Cleverness in detection of truth." The significance for those interested in tales is that this has variants in India, Indonesia, Malaya, and the Philippines, where there are at least three Pampangan versions, one Visayan, one Tagalog, two Bagobo, and one Manobo.

The significance for prawns is that it shows that prawns (or shrimps) are seen as important players in the animal world, even among such luminaries as crocodiles and deer. The word "shrimp" in English has derogatory connotations, but our native names (*hipon, pasayan, sugpo,* etc.) do not: ". . . [Sugpo] came out of the water, and you can see how big he was for his claws looked really like spears," the text says. Sugpo was both big and important in his role in the life cycle. A folk belief in Odiongan, Romblon, says that catching shrimps and other water animals may be done only after orally asking due permission of the supernatural beings who own the springs and other waters -- just as one does when fishing, or when hunting game.

On the other hand, shrimps are so much a part of our culture that we have eaten them all our lives, and assume that we can always have them, and have them fresh. In the history of food, shrimps were not always commercially available because they cannot, like meat, be transported long distances. Once taken out of the water, they quickly die; once they die, they even more quickly decay. And so only those near fresh, brackish, and marine water sources could catch them for their home consumption. One reads of families in the US going shrimping on their vacations, and enjoying shrimp then. Shrimp only became transportable and commercially viable with the advent of refrigeration and its later technology.

Filipinos have them so available and so abundant, however, that we have traditional ways of dealing with the excess. We make *alamang* into *patis* and *bagoong;* we dry them into *hebe* and the Ilonggo *kalkag.* So advanced is our shrimp-drying technology, in fact, that it was exported to Louisiana, New Orleans, early in the century. Apparently no one knew how to preserve shrimp there, until Lee Yuen, who went to Louisiana from Canton, and was astonished by the abundance of shrimp, went into the shrimp-drying business, building a platform on piles for this purpose. The profitable venture caused a village to be named Chinamen's Platform. Filipinos later went too, and the village was re-named Manila Village. The Filipino colony in Louisiana still exists.

Here in the Philippines, we like our shrimps and prawns best when fresh, and jumping in the basket. Because this is still possible, we usually serve them simply steamed *(halabos),* roasted on coal *(inihaw),* or dressed with vinegar and condiments *(kinilaw),* and we

have a dish like the Jumping Shrimps of La Union, a *kinilaw* so fresh the souring is done a second before eating. These shrimps (usually tiny river shrimps) are served live, with calamansi. One squeezes the calamansi over them, and because of the sting they jump, and as they jump one picks them up and drops them into the mouth, savoring the sweet freshness of their last moments of life. Shrimps to the max, indeed.

The simply steamed and roasted are eaten with many different kinds of *sawsawan* and accompaniments: *suka't bawang; kamias* finely sliced mixed with *bagoong*, tomatoes and onions; *patis*; a green mango salad, etc. The Quezon province *pinais* has shrimps steamed with young coconut; the Bikolanos cook small shrimps in coconut milk and chili, until the *gata* is transmuted into oil. Prawns are generally steamed or grilled, and the very large ones are reserved for guests and feasts (Christmas, fiestas, birthday and other important celebrations). Both shrimps and prawns are of course most often cooked in *gata*, or savored as *sinigang*.

Shrimps and prawns belong to the same family, and Filipinos usually distinguish between them by size. The tiniest are *alamang*, the largest are *sugpo* and *ulang*, and all those in between are *hipon, suwahe, pasayan*, etc. In the U.S., most sizes are called shrimp; in Great Britain, most sizes are called prawns. The Philippines, rich indeed in crustaceans, not only has the largest prawns in Southeast Asia, the Tiger Prawn and the Giant River Prawn, but also many other sizes, each delicious for different reasons. They are listed by the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) in the publication *Manwal sa Nakakaing Krustasyo ng Pilipinas* by Hiroshi Motoh (1986) as follows:

1. *Alamang* or Kweikung or Alamang Paste Shrimp or Bubok Shrimp (*Acetes spp; hipon* in Ilonggo, *uyap* in Cebuano)
2. *Sugpo* or Giant/Jumbo Tiger Prawn (*Penaeus monodon; lukon* in Ilongo; *pansat, pantat* in Cebuano)
3. *Hipong windu* or Green Tiger prawn, Bamboo Node Prawn, Grooved Tiger (*Penaeus semisulcatus; hipong bulik* or *hipon* in Tagalog; *kuyan* in Aklanon; *buktot* in Cebuano)
4. *Mestisa* or Banana Prawn, White Prawn (*Penaeus merguiensis* de Man; *luhan, putian* in Cebuano; *puti, hipong puti* in Tagalog; *pasayan* in Ilonggo)
5. *Hipong puti* or White Prawn, Banana Prawn (*Penaeus indicus; pasayan* in Ilonggo; *lunhan* in Cebuano)

6. *Bulik* or Western King Prawn, Blue-leg (King) Prawn, Furrowed prawn (*Penaeus latisulcatus; bulik* in Cebuano)
7. *Hipong bulik* or Kuruma Prawn, Japanese King Prawn (*Penaeus japonicus; bulik* in Cebuano)
8. *Suahe* or Greasy-back Shrimp (*Metapenaeus ensis de Haan; hipong suahe* in Cebuano; *batod* in Aklanon)
9. *Batod-Dagat* or Endeavour Prawn (*Metapenaeus endeavouri, batod* in Aklanon)
10. *Batod-Berde* or School Prawn, Green-tail Prawn (*Metapenaeus dalli; batod* in Aklanon)
11. *Kuakit* or Southern Velvet Shrimp (*Metapenaeopsis palmensis)*
12. *Bagulan* or Brown Rough Shrimp, Hardback Prawn (*Trachypenaeus fulvus; bagulan* in Cebuano; *kuakit* in Tagalog, Cebuano)
13. *Higanteng Ulang* or Giant River Prawn, Giant Malaysian Prawn, Giant Freshwater Prawn (*Macrobranchium rosenbergii; burok, pahi* in Ilonggo; *ulang* in Cebuano; *uwang* in Surigaonon)
14. *Ulang* or Monkey River Shrimp (*Macrobranchium lar; ulang* in Tagalog, Cebuano; *uwang* in Surigaonon).

The listing does not include names in other regions, which vary greatly, e.g. the *tagunton* of some Tagalog regions is a river shrimp with long whiskers, and does not seem to be any of the above, although it would seem to be related to the giant river prawn.

The prawn then, in Philippine lore and culture, is special. It is part of our culture of abundance, fruit of the richness of our teeming seas, rivers and ponds. Shrimps and prawns always come in multiples, never singly, and we rest assured that they are there, they are abundant, and they are fresh.

They also belong to our culture of freshness, because the sources are so near to most of us, because of our seven thousand islands, our long coastline, our many rivers, springs, ponds, and seas. This freshness shaped our traditional ways of cooking, and our custom of having them as near life-sweetness as possible.

The range of our prawn-shrimp repertoire, the fact that we eat crustaceans small and large, fresh and dried, salted and soured, from small and large waters, the ways in which we catch, preserve

and cook prawns and shrimps, and now culture, produce and propagate them, speak of the Filipino flexibility and closeness to the environment.

The prawn, in effect, is a folkloric and epicurean, traditional and industrial, sweet and succulent way of tasting our culture, and savoring the joy of being Filipino.

Ang Mahiwagang Nilaga

The simple feat of boiling meat -- what miracles it can create! Of course to do this, fire had to be discovered, animals had to be caught or raised and butchered, and the technology of boiling refined. As a neophyte cook, I had to be told that one did not boil meat furiously, but simmered slowly; that a rippling simmer in a broth over a low fire was infinitely more effective and tenderizing than a fast angry boil.

Think of all the boiled dishes that belie the simplicity of the method by their goodness: the New England boiled dinner of meats and vegetables, that seems to represent solid values and nutrition; the Spanish *cocido*, that with the addition of sausages and chickpeas assumes a Castillian flair; the Italian *bolito* of pork, beef, tongue, chicken, cured meats, etc. that turns into a wonder when eaten with a sauce of basil and oil; the French *pot-au-feu* that allows meats and vegetables, herbs and flavors, to meet and blend in a pot, and become a harmony.

All cuisines from East and West have somewhere a "basic boil" -- the Japanese put in bean curd; the Chinese add magic powders and herbs -- that acknowledge the folk wisdom of just cooking in water -- the right way.

Filipino cooking has, at base, a simplicity of method that comes from earth wisdom. The agricultural cycle that we lived and live by, the products of that cycle, the time and pace it imposes, and the lifestyle it develops, all dictate simplicity. The cycle is slow (compare it to the industrial cycle), and so there is time for long, slow cooking -- which tames anything from wild boar to *bayawak*. The products are near, and so the chickens can be fattened for the pot, the pigs and cows butchered and the cooking planned, the

greens gathered at need, in freshness and health. The lifestyle is spare and wise, with few frills and luxuries.

And so we roast and steam and boil. Only much later did we learn how to sauté (from the Spanish) and fry (from the Chinese), to bake (from the Americans) and add sauces (from all of them and all of Europe). Our indigenous cuisine is very often *inihaw, pinasingaw, nilaga.* With a *sawsawan* perhaps, for accent and emphasis.

Our beloved *sinigang* and *tinola* are boiled. They are the same, really: the Tagalog sour-stew fish with *sampaloc* or *kamyas;* the Visayan sour-stew with tomatoes *(tinowa).* The degree of sourness varies according to regional and individual taste, but the principle is the same -- cook the fish fresh, and lightly; sour to flavor and refresh.

Nilaga is found everywhere. *Tinolang manok* is *nilagang manok. Nilagang baboy, nilagang baka,* are found in almost every Philippine market in the morning -- breakfast for the vendors and the buyers, the truck drivers and load-carriers. They cook on through lunch, when they serve the same clientele and others, the meat growing more tender, the broth growing in flavor and thickening -- or perhaps turning more watery, if the pot dips low and has to be "extended" without time to start afresh.

Variations are to be found everywhere. At the San Jose, Antique market, we found the cheap cuts of meat (*pata, buntot,* bones), flavored with *puso ng saging.* In the Silay City, Negros Occidental market we found *bindonggo* (goto) boiling with tomatoes and *batuan,* which gave it a pleasant sourness. In Cebu and Mindanao, we encountered variations of *balbakwa* -- usually pata or buntot boiled tender, and flavored with tomatoes, with beans, with whatever is the custom.

Certainly one of the most famous of the many nilaga of our culture is *bulalo,* in which the skill consists of boiling the kneecap and all its cartilaginous succulences in little else but water, pepper and salt. The ideal result is golden broth into which one cuts some of the meat, scrapes off some of the cartilage and other soft parts, and drops some of the bone marrow dug out from the bone. One can season with *patis* and/or calamansi; some add vegetables and some don't; others pour the rice soup on the rice, while others pour rice into the soup. The idea is to savor the goodness of the beef and the bone that has been distilled into the broth.

The original Spanish *pochero* is also nilaga. One adds vegetables, and a tomato sauce into the basic meat and broth. The Cebuano *pochero* is an interesting variant: it consists of a beef bone with marrow, boiled long and slowly with an ear of corn which sweetens the broth, and with finely sliced (finer than julienne slices) bamboo shoot, which adds an indefinable flavor and texture.

In Cebu, we first tasted it at Abuhan coffee shop of the Kan-irag Hotel, where Resil Mojares had housed several academics who were attending a folklore conference years ago. Soon we found ourselves drifting into the coffee shop for pochero -- for dinner, for breakfast, for merienda. And we were eating it the way the regulars were: deep bowl in front, rice spooned into it, and mouthfuls of soup, or soup and meat, or meat and rice, or soup and rice -- quite a variety in such a simplicity.

Recently we kept hearing the prescription: for the best pochero, or the best bulalo (the same in Cebu), go to Marjo's even if you have to eat with your right hand while you drive away flies with your left. That was an intriguing statement, especially since we were getting the same news from all sorts of people.

Marjo's Food and Drink turns out to be the ground floor of an unpainted, very modest house with unmatched tables and chairs. There are only three dishes on the menu: pochero, *lechong kawali,* and fried chicken. Since every table was deep into pochero, we followed suit, and have never forgotten the experience. The bones are large, marrow-filled, and surrounded by soft bits of flesh and cartilage. The broth is golden and delicious; no one touched the patis bottle or added salt or pepper. The meat is rosy-red; one is torn between having it pristine, or with rice. And the flies are minimal, and shooed away for the diner (*paspas* by the staff.)

The 70 beef bones consumed daily are cooked in three large kaldero for five hours; Elijorde Abito starts cooking at 2 a.m. Our host made quick calculations as to the cost of the bones and the wood fire, and the profits (all pots are empty by evening) to be made from just the miracle of boiling. Who needs anything else?

The Noodles of Our (Long) Lives

Chances are, your Christmas, New Year or birthday feasting will include a few dishes of noodles -- a bought or ordered *pancit palabok* perhaps, or Tita Nena's special golden *sotanghon* with chicken and *tengang daga*, or Lola Tinay's individual, invented, created *pancit* which comes with flaked *tinapa*, slivers of *kamias* and other magic sprinkled on top. For we do celebrate with pancit, whether or not we consciously think of the Chinese belief that noodles are symbols of long life and good health.

We celebrate with it for the same reason that we celebrate with all our other Christmas food -- because in our tradition it has become connected to the special, the out-of-the-ordinary, the feast. Our Christmas food, in fact, is a history of our feasting.

Basic to any region are the rice cakes of the season: the *puto bumbong* popping up from bamboo tubes in the cold dawns of the *simbang gabi*; the *bibingka*, fire above and below, golden with salted eggs and native cheese, for which the hot accompanying *salabat* waits; the *putong sulot* and *putong lusong* in the San Fernando, Pampanga churchyard munched while the kaleidoscopic lanterns whirl in their patterns of light; the various *suman* and *biko* and *sapin-sapin* and other *kakanin* with which we celebrate rice, the staff of our daily life. This is an unconscious salute to the grain so important to our lives. It is also a product of historical syncretism -- December, the time of the rice harvest was also, in wonderful coincidence, the time of the biggest Christian feast, the birth of Christ. Naturally rice in its festive form, the rice cake (puto, kutsinta, suman, bibingka, etc.), became part of our Christmas.

The Spaniards, who introduced Christianity and thus Christmas, naturally introduced the specialties of their Feliz Pascua -- thus the *ensaimadas, turrones, chocolate, queso de bola, relleno, galantina,*

jamon en dulce, castañas, apples and grapes that we associate with Christmas.

And then there are the noodles. They do connect with rice too, but are more prominently proof of and a silent salute to the Chinese influences so deeply imbedded in our culture. How did noodles come to the Philippines? I surmise that some lonely Chinese merchant, having come to the Philippines with his load of silks, while waiting for his Filipino trading partners to return with their load of beeswax and beche-de-mer, thought with longing of the noodles of his native land. The Chinese have had noodles on their table at least since the Tang dynasty (618-907 A.D.) because wheat, one of the staples of the northern regions, was early made into noodles, which soon came to be a favorite quick-cooking food of almost every region.

When our lonely Chinese merchant tried to duplicate the noodle dishes of his homeland (perhaps at first with noodles he had brought along, since wheat does not grow here), he may have made a fair approximation, but not an exact one, because the local ingredients -- meats, vegetables, seasoning -- are not identical to their Chinese equivalents. His creation was then the first Sino-Philippine pancit. The term comes from the Hokkien *pian+e+sit*, which means "something that is conveniently cooked" and originally did not necessarily mean noodles.

If our lonely Chinese merchant eventually married a Filipina -- many did, since the wait for merchandise could be long, and many transients eventually made homes here -- she probably learned to cook the dishes he liked, but again only made fair approximations, because not only were her ingredients Philippine, but so was her taste, a *panglasa* born of her own growing up and traditions.

The noodle dish thus became indigenized -- acculturated, adapted to local ingredients, tastes, occasions. Eventually every region developed its own version: fishing towns adding oysters and squid, as in Pancit Malabon; rice-growing areas putting in a kind of crumbled *okoy* as in Pancit Marilao; inland and upland towns using sausages and available vegetables, etc. Eventually every cook, chef, housewife, developed his/her own signature version, thus all the noodles of our lives.

Pancit also adjusted itself to the occasions of our communal lives. On an ordinary day, it could be very simple -- garlic, onions, tomatoes, sautéed with a bit of shrimp and pork and whatever

vegetables are available, and whatever noodle is in the pantry. Or it could be cooked in the market and eaten off a banana leaf, as is the Pancit Habhab of Lucban, Quezon. Or it could be bought from the neighborhood panciteria and come wrapped in a cone of paper lined with banana leaf. In this form it was a popular *pasalubong* for a working person to bring home to the family after work, or for a husband to bring home as peace offering after being out late.

But if it is for a feast, then we gather oodles of makings, flake the *tinapa*, crumble the *chicharron*, pound the shrimps for the sauce, slice thin the kamias, soak the noodles in chicken broth and other condiments, etc. Or we order from the community's best pancit-maker, or from the aunt or lola who has made it her specialty. For pancit is as versatile and as flexible as are Filipino lives.

The mystique of the noodle lies not only in its niche in Filipino lives and feasting, or in its versatility, but also in its many forms -- noodles fat and thin, soft and dry, opaque and transparent, with or without egg, for every mood and nuance of flavor desired. Most of them still have Chinese names -- *bihon, miswa, miki, sotanghon* — indicating origin or at least affinity. Noodles here, as in China, are usually hand-cut, but often they are made by forcing a flat sheet of dough through the holes in a colander-like device into boiling water. Special noodles are made by holding the dough in both hands and swinging it around so that it stretches in the air.

In Hunan, China, we read of a special noodle made "by swinging a rope of dough, doubling it over and swinging it again, keeping the noodles floured so they do not stick together. This not only makes them fine as hair, it also develops the gluten in the high-gluten local flour to a maximal degree, and is an impressive performance to watch. The noodles are quick-fried and serve as a bed for the fish or anything else wanting a substrate." A trip to a noodle factory could be a "magical mystery tour"; the transition from flour to dough sheet to fine strand being fascinating as process and performance.

In the Philippines, noodles are made in many localities. Until recently, in fact, the locality supplied only the locals, and did not usually ship the product out. Now, however, some large factories produce, package and sell on region-wide or even nation-wide basis. The same is true for most of Southeast Asia, which has noodles analogous to ours, for example the Char Kway Teow of Malaysia, which uses flat and wide fresh rice noodles somewhat

like *miki*; the Thai Phat Thai, in which dried rice noodles combine with eggs, bean sprouts and condiments; the Laotian Kai Keng Khao Poon, which uses "Chinese vermicelli."

China is the great noodle-making country, but E. N. Anderson in *The Food of China* (Yale University Press, 1988) says that it is not true, as was generally believed, that Italian noodles (spaghetti, etc.) originated from China, having been carried back to the West by Marco Polo. He believes, however, that the Chinese may have invented egg noodles. Historical and graphic evidence demonstrates that noodles were street food in Italy even before Marco Polo's time.

Noodles are made from rice (e.g. *bihon*), wheat, buckwheat, bean (e.g. mongo) or pea flours. They come dried or fresh, are soaked in water or other liquid, are sautéed, boiled or fried, served with or without broth, for breakfast, lunch, dinner, or merienda, and every change of occasion or accompaniments makes a different dish. Note the range we have: pancit *luglog*, in which the noodles are shaken in hot water in a strainer; pancit Molo, in which squares (wonton) rather than elongations are used; all the pancit *guisado* variants and combinations, in which frying is the principal process; pancit *buko*, in which coconut flesh is cut like noodles. And notice all the towns and provinces that have marked their individual noodle dishes with their names (Pancit Banahaw, Malabon, Marilao).

One finds noodles in Japan and Korea, and of course throughout Southeast Asia, where they all seem to bear the imprint of Chinese parentage, although they are chili-hot in Malaysia, sweet and hot in Vietnam and in Thailand, mixed with Spanish-type *chorizos* in the Philippines. The noodles of our lives are strands of history, woven into our daily lives and our feasting.

Pancit, in our country and culture a favored gift for family and friends, represents good wishes for many joys, many noodles, and long and healthy lives.

The Original Pancit Lucban

Many thoughts turn to Lucban, Quezon in May, because of the inimitable **Pahiyas**, festival of food and thanksgiving to San Isidro Labrador, patron saint of farmers. In 1993 so many cars, cyclists, and tourist buses were wending their way up that there was a gigantic, Manila-style traffic jam outside Sariaya that stalled us (we were on our way down at 10 a.m.) for two hours. The fuchsia, emerald and sunshine-colored *kiping* (rice wafers) in chandeliers, rosettes, bouquets, wreaths, were resplendent against the brown houses and the blue sky, lighted up even further by the festive spirit of the Lucbanin. There is no fiesta like the Pahiyas in all the world.

That day was for me a discovery as well of Pansit Lucban, which I first read about in Monina A. Mercado's "Small Town, Philippines": ". . . there is *pancit habhab*, the humblest of this poor town's fare but perhaps the most loved . . . it is *miki* ladled on squares of banana leaf. With no accompanying fork, *pancit* must be eaten *habhab*-style: sucked from the leaf."

We were looking for lunch when we came across this most inviting sign: Lukban Miki Factory / Old Center Panciteria / Since 1937 (85 San Luis, Tel. 268). Right up front two smiling ladies were spreading out mounds of brownish *miki* on a counter, weighing and tucking it into plastic bags. On the sidewalk, the bags (P14 a kilo) were being vended by a pretty four-year-old girl. There were a few tables for diners, and a brief menu on the wall: "Pancit Lucban, Pancit Bihon, Miki Bihon, Chamie, Lomie, Kimlo, Chop Suey, Qui Quiam, Lumpia Shanghai, Pork Chop, Lechon Kawali, Sinigang na Lechon, Bistig na Atay, Scramble Egg, Fried Chicken, Crispy Pata, Fried Longanisa, Chicharon Baboy." But everyone was having Pancit Lucban.

This is the fresh miki sautéed with *sayote* slices, pork in biggish cubes, and toyo. On it is sprinkled the local coconut vinegar (or *calamansi* if you insist), and that's all. Its simple honesty is delicious. A hearty plateful costs P10, but students can order a serving for P2 -- on a banana leaf, to eat *habhab*, as it is eaten in the streets and in the market.

The late Pedro Araña was making the miki even as a young man. Now his widow, Candelaria Quebada, makes it with the help of her son (a doctor sent to school by the *miki*, she laughs) and his wife, a schoolteacher. In the backroom / kitchen is the whole mini-factory: a table on which slabs of dough are kneaded; a machine that flattens these into noodle-thin sheets; and another that cuts the sheets into strips. The fresh noodles keep for about two days, but if sun-dried could keep for perhaps two weeks. The Araña family does not have time to do any sun-drying; all that they manufacture is used up immediately by their restaurant and by others, since they supply most of the town.

We also discovered that day what friends said was the best maker of *longganisang Lucban*, famous for its chunks of pork (no meat grinders for them) and oregano flavor. Eker and Ely Longanisa (114 A. Racelis, tel. 2304) has no signboard. We found it by walking near the church as directed, and peering in to find a ceiling hung with longganisa, wall to wall. Inside, young and old, male and female, were quietly making more longganisa -- mixing the filling, stuffing it into miles of pork intestines, tying up the tiny sausages. It was quite the best I've had.

Lucban will always be memorable now, not only for feasting, but also for the triumphantly simple, local, humble Pancit Lucban, born of the same culture and spirit as *longanisa*, *kiping*, and **Pahiyas**.

The Vanishing Scene

The phrase is borrowed from painter Lino Severino, Jr., my relative and fellow-Silaynon, who painted a series of old houses, doors, windows, churches, and other fragments of scenes now vanishing. Once during the holidays, as I collected details of hometown cooking (the way we eat when families go home and get together), I thought with some alarm: how many of these traditional recipes are disappearing or have been totally lost? How many mothers, grandmothers, and cooks have passed away without writing down their recipes? Or without passing them on to *anak* or *apo*? Or how many have wished to pass them on and found no takers, because *anak* or *apo* were at their offices, computers or businesses and had no time for the kitchen? And how much of our history, and of our beings would be lost when these flavors vanish in the mists of the past?

This occurred to me most especially in Silay, my hometown famous for good cooks and *kalan-unon (kakanin)*. "Does anyone still make *buñuelos de viento*?" I wondered. I had last had them in the home of Lindy and Cecile Locsin, whose cook had learned from his aunt, the late Adela Locsin, one of the town's famed cooks. "Maguet Locsin!" answered Lyn Gamboa, my sister-in-law. Margarita Gaston Locsin, sister of the late great mezzo-soprano Conchita Gaston, bears much cooking tradition in her memory, and has trained her staff in it. She offered to send her cook over to make the *buñuelos* in our kitchen, because it had to be eaten fresh from the fire.

The *buñuelo* is a fritter of flour and eggs, fried in oil, and could be pancake-shaped. The word is used colloquially as in "Es buñuelo?" meaning: How inconsiderate! To ask for that when there isn't enough time! *Buñuelos de viento* are small round puffs

made by dropping dough balls in hot oil. Immediately they puff up and float, thus the name, translatable as "wind puffs."

Merlit fried them in small batches, and sent them to us on the veranda in rapid relays. As Maguet had directed, we poured syrup on them, ate them hot, and found them ethereal. "Is there a maximum number allowable per person?" asked Eric Zerrudo of the Metropolitan Museum. And no one would admit how many heavenly mouthfuls each had had.

As Maguet later admitted, probably only Merlit and she still make buñuelos in Silay. The recipe is not lost; there is one in Purita Kalaw Ledesma's *Family Recipes* (1986), which were gathered from Kalaw, Ledesma and other families linked by marriage. In Gene Gonzalez's *Cocina Sulipeña: Culinary Gems from Old Pampanga* (1993), culled from his family heritage, *buñuelos* are Crisp Fried Bread in layers, meant to be "dunked in huge cups of *tsokolate espeso*." So the recipe is available, but who serves it? Are the occasions, the impulse, the consciousness of it vanishing?

Are there other recipes that you fear may go? Your Lola's *galantina*, maybe? An aunt's *ensaymada*? (One famous *ensaymada* in Malolos was lost forever because the recipe was not passed on, and current versions are said to be poor imitations.) Or an *ulam* like *paklay* (with green pineapple and *balimbing*), now no longer served in Iloilo or Silay? Or *Cabeza de Jabali*, which the late Mariano Henson of Angeles has in his mimeographed *Cusinang Capampangan* (1968)? He also has *Las Famosas Bola-bolas del Ateneo de Manila 1907-1917*, which no one at the Ateneo knows.

If there are, we plead that you write them down please, or learn them, or teach them, or collect them into cookbooks. Do not let the savors of our heritage vanish from our tables and from memory.

New Ways with Old Dishes

I have never heard a Filipino say "I am tired of Filipino dishes," but have often heard Pinoys claim to be tired of hamburgers, fast food, bread, etc. Can we ever really tire of our native food, of the dishes that we ate as children, that formed our tastes and our idea of good food?

Perhaps not, but this does not mean that we cannot make any changes in them -- experiment, invent, create. Food, like language, is living culture, and as such changes with the times. The old ways are tested and true; the new ways are not necessarily betrayals, if they are appropriate and result in good food. Let me tell you then about some innovations I have tasted on various restaurant or home tables.

SINIGANG. *Barotak*, is what Perdigon Vocalan of Balaw-Balaw restaurant in Angono calls their local sinigang. It is made of whatever fish is available -- often small fish like *ayungin* -- and vegetables in season (*sigarilyas, kangkong*, etc.). But the broth is thickened with the juice of pounded shrimp heads -- *malinamnam at maasim*. Lovely, especially on a rainy day.

BALBAKWA. This is also Digon's innovation. *Balbakwa* (which to Tagalogs is fish preserved in salt -- called *binuro* by Ilonggos -- and to Cebuanos is a meat stew), the fish, is cooked in vinegar and, to add zing, some *siling haba*, sliced. This is served in the center of a platter, surrounded by thick slices of *talong*, fried. A good combination.

BALAW-BALAW. This *burong hipon* with fermented rice can be eaten as a relish with *sinigang na kanduli sa miso*, or by itself. Digon recently served it topped with slices of crisp *inihaw na baboy*, and they went together rather well.

LAING. Gene Gonzalez serves this in his restaurant, Lasap . . . Pagkaing Pilipino, in a coconut. The *buko* is *mala-uhog*, very young and tender, and with each spoonful of *laing* one takes, one scrapes off a bit of the *buko*. The tender sweet flesh does indescribable wonders for the laing -- a new flavor dimension.

ALIMANGO. I have always hesitated to order crabs in restaurants because they are so difficult to eat gracefully. We are used to piles of fresh, sweet, steamed crabs, which we open with our hands. One then pries out the *aligue*, the white flesh in the various crevices and claws, and dips them in *sawsawan*. One must eat this with friends, at home, in relaxation, without having to watch one's table manners (as taught in school). One should not, however, be ashamed to eat food as "the natives do", because those are native table manners that grow out of the culture. However, a restaurant's game rules are different.

And so Glenda Barretto, at The Nielson Tower, recognizing that in that setting and ambiance one must "play by restaurant rules," used to serve her *alimango sa gata* flaked before cooking. All the flesh was then tucked back into the shell, and sealed with the *aligue*. Clever!

TIYAN NG BANGUS. Bangus Restaurant (Greenhills) has long been indulging the decadent taste for *tiyan ng bangus* by serving "prime cuts" -- *puro tiyan* -- *sinigang*, or *paksiw*, or fried, or *a la pobre* with toasted garlic, or *a la bistek* with soy sauce, calamansi, and sliced onions. Glenda Barretto, again at The Nielson Tower, wrapped them in the pale-green leaves of the lettuce tree *(colis)* with *buro* (fermented rice) as sauce, then baked the packets. *Vientre de bangus*, she called it, and it was excellent.

BALUT. Of course the best way to eat *balut* is as we have been used to: crack the shell lightly, sip the broth, peel slowly and relish the yolk, and the tender chick *na balut pa sa puti*. But if the shell has cracked, and the broth leaked out, the street food vendors of Cubao roll it in batter (flour, egg, sometimes a bright yellow food-coloring as well), fry it, and serve it with a *sawsawan* of *suka't sili*. French-fried balut -- it is the *pulutan* of the season. You can also do this with *penoy*. In order to introduce it gently to foreigners, Glenda Barretto created *Sorpresa de Balut*, in which the egg is peeled, seasoned with spices and herbs, and baked in a ramekin under a golden crust.

NILASING NA HIPON. Gene Gonzalez soaks them in *lambanog*, and then fries them crisp. Digon Vocalan soaks *tagunton* (river shrimp) in gin, gives them a dusting of flour, and fries them crisp. He also does *nilasing na palaka* when it is in season, and *nilasing na biya* -- tiny ones of uniform size.

ADOBO. These techniques are old rather than new, but there are many ways to cook adobo. Cooking pork and/or chicken in vinegar, laurel, peppercorns, and garlic is the basic procedure, with the meat browning slowly in the cooking. Adding soy sauce is a modern hurry-up trick. There are therefore wet adobos, with plenty of sauce. There are adobos allowed to cook dry until the oil comes out, at which point the meat is fried in the oil, for a crisp dish (*adobong matanda*, it is called in Angono, and it is one of the processes for cooking *bayawak*). One can also add coconut milk, for *adobo sa gata*. Or one can mash chicken liver and use it to thicken the sauce. Larry Cruz used to serve it in his restaurant in Washington, D.C. wrapped in banana leaves -- adobo and rice together -- a technique of packaging. And my cousin Lolita L. Jardeleza, who lives in Washington, and whose 11 children are Americans who love adobo, used to add string beans to her adobo -- so that her children would eat vegetables.

LUMPIA. This heritage from Chinese visitors and ancestors is surely one of the most versatile dishes in the Philippine repertoire. It can contain pork, as in Lumpiang Shanghai, or fish, as in Lumpiang Bangus. It often contains *ubod*, as in the Negros Occidental *lumpiang ubod*, where it is sautéed with pork, shrimp, and garlic, and not served with sauce. It can contain a mixture of vegetables. It can come *hubad*, without the lumpia wrapper. At Grove - Luto ni Inay, Cely Kalaw used to serve one stuffed with *singkamas*, with a dip of vinegar and finely-shredded singkamas. Gene Gonzalez has a delicious one at Lasap, stuffed with three kinds of onions.

SINANGAG. The *sinangag na kanin* that is the basis of the Pinoy breakfast was probably invented by early-risers who, to prepare a quick breakfast, took last night's rice (instead of cooking a new pot), moistened it, and fried it -- with salt and garlic for flavor. Rudy Siojo, who used to have a restaurant called Rudy's Country Chef, used to fry the rice in butter, chop the garlic fine and toast it golden-brown, and then sprinkle it on the rice. Joaquin Imperial used to fry the rice with mushrooms. In Roxas City, Capiz, it is fried with *kalkag*, tiny dried shrimps or *alamang*. The Chinese

fry it with salted fish -- in tiny, almost invisible bits. And of course one could have it with bits of ham, or bits of *tinapa*, or of *tuyo*, or with tiny toasted *dilis*. Rice is indeed a wonderful thing, and *sinangag* a wonderful breakfast dish.

PINAKBET. Even *pinakbet*, the traditional Ilokano vegetable stew with *bagoong*, has known changes in its time. The original has tiny native *ampalaya*, *talong* and *okra* tossed in a pot with fish *bagoong* and tomatoes. No oil; no frying. The Tagalogs have sautéed it in oil. Some Ilokanos add *bagnet* (the Ilokano *lechon kawali*) to it. Others add *chicharron*. Gene Gonzalez cooks it in olive oil.

What does it all mean? Traditional ways are wonderful; but new ways, when applied with understanding and sensitivity, can create a dish anew -- without betraying the tradition.

Sa Banwa sang Dulce: The Flavors of Negros

Everywhere we go searching for Philippine regional food, our inquiries are answered with: "Oh, there's nothing special about our food; it's just like everywhere else." And everywhere we've found them mistaken -- not ignorant, but blind to the wealth of food culture in their kitchens and markets, on their tables and plates. It is hard to determine, indeed, the particularities or specialties of the food of one's region; harder still to define the particular flavors of each province or region. Are there boundaries for taste? Do tastes change across linguistic or physical boundaries? What is particular to each region?

When I was asked to go home to Silay on the occasion of the centenary of Negros Occidental (November 5, 1990) to speak about the food of Negros, I had to confront these questions. What is Negros food? What are its flavors? To start: What do Negrenses cook, eat, like?

First of all, there are the foods or dishes shared with the rest of the country: *tinola nga manok, dinuguan, lechon, guinamus, kinilaw, inasal nga manok*. These are, however, tuned to the Negros palate and given its stamp. The dinuguan is lighter and slightly more sour than its Tagalog counterpart; lechon is stuffed with *tanglad* rather than with tamarind, mango or mabolo leaves; guinamus is drier than other *bagoong alamang; inasal nga manok* is marinated by some in nipa vinegar and achuete; *kinilaw* in Sagay has salted egg mashed into the vinegar to cut excessive sourness.

Dishes of Spanish/Mexican, Chinese and American influence are also shared by Negrenses with the rest of the country, but with a difference: *empanadas* have fine fluted crusts like *mil hojas; lumpia* is stuffed with *ubod* from trees felled that day, has garlic built into

the sautéeing (no sauce), and a jaunty spring onion tucked into the silk-thin wrapper.

Secondly, there is of course food special to the region, favored by Ilonggos. For Negrenses, many of these foods come directly from Iloilo, as did their ancestors. (Negros was populated during the 19th century sugar boom principally by scions of Iloilo families.) This heritage includes some dishes obvious because they bear the names of their origins: La Paz *bachoy* (innards and noodles in rich beef broth), *pansit Molo* (wonton soup), and the many cookies and biscuits collectively called *Sopas de Molo: galletas, bañadas, hojaldres, kinamunsil, bizcocho Principe* and *de caña*, etc.

Also regional in patronage are vegetables like *kadyos* (pigeon pea; often cooked with pork) and *ubad* (heart of the banana tree, often cooked with chicken and *gata*), *kulitis* (amaranth) and *alugbati* (Ceylon spinach), young *langka* (made into a coconut milk salad) or *kamansi* (breadnut fruit).

Regional as well are certain recipes, like *apan-apan* (*adobadong kangkong*, with guinamus), *laswa* (mixed boiled vegetables), *alimusan* (sea catfish) cooked lightly in vinegar, *paksiw* cooked dry into *pinamalhan, bindonggo* (tripe) soured with *batuan* and cooked with langka or kamansi; and especially *binacol* (chicken cooked with young coconut, formerly in a bamboo or coconut) and *paklay* (goat or beef internal organs cooked with vegetables and soured with *balimbing* and green pineapple).

The Luzon *pastillas de leche* is in stark contrast to the Negros *dulce gatas*, which is caramel-colored and chewy. The Luzon white *tira-tira* becomes, in Negros, brown and speckled with sesame seeds. These are all "Bisaya guid," special to the region -- and now found in places to which many Ilonggos have migrated.

Since food is part of our most lively culture, Negrense food is continually being created by cooks and hobbyists. Reming Sugon, whose success story inspires, has a bottled tamarind sauce that people use on both fish and meat. Alice Villanueva of El Ideal has a guapple pie with crumbled topping that has achieved fame even outside the province. Many others have created breads, confections, desserts, sausages, snacks, etc., some available in trade fairs, most to be ordered only from homes, because many Negros women accept orders for their specialties.

If those are the foods of Negros, what then are their flavors? Edilberto N. Alegre, cultural researcher and food expert (and my

co-author), being an outsider, points out that, if Ilocanos favor the bitter (as in *pinakbet* and the famous *pinapaitan*, a goat dish with a bile sauce), the Tagalogs the sour (*katamtaman na asim* in *sinigang*), and many Bicolanos the hot ("Bicol Express" is a dish of sautéed chili peppers), the Ilonggos have their own predilections. For them, no large dominant flavor, but layers and nuances "prized over predominance of flavor."

It is therefore food with a certain mildness, even what one might call a sweetness. This is what made me title this piece "Sa Banwa sang Dulce" (in the land of sweetness), not only in reference to the sugar we grow, but also in acknowledgement of these layers of mildness.

The phrase comes from a song my father used to sing, the lyrics of which are filled with food: "Sa banwa sang dulce sakop ensaimada, probinsiya pan de sal, Negros pan de siyosa, may isa nga natabu kay dalagang bukid, napatay si bitsukoy, kinuga ni lubid-lubid." After I dared sing this to the audience at the Negros Heritage lectures at the museum called Balay Negrense, I was given by Alan Gaston and Monsignor Guillermo Gaston (who donated the house to a foundation to develop into a museum) even more verses -- all still having to do with food.

At another food lecture months back, in Iligan, an Ilonggo from Iloilo gave me another food song, this time about inasal nga manok: "Tatay Miroy, cariñosa. Ihaw kita manok imo paa; indi ka ayawan imo tul-an; indi ka mabusog imo li-og, Tatay Miroy, cariñosa."

Negros food, which has obviously inspired the folk to sing, is therefore: Food that evolved through Negros history, in a land populated mostly from Iloilo, that developed a tradition of good eating through a monocrop economy that went through many good times and some bad, developed by a people who did not relegate cooking to others, but kept it alive in their homes, mostly in the hands of wives and mothers, women proud of their ability and not ashamed to take orders and cook for others, in a present day that is proudly recalling its heritage in a desire to build for tomorrow.

Negros food comes from its past, and is part of the pride with which Negrenses build their future. It is part of the culture. *Matamis, manamit gid ang amon kultura!* (Sweet, truly delicious is our culture!)

A Durian Experience

One morning in Davao, we visited a durian farm in Calinan, through the kindness of Cholong Lorenzo. First we came upon mangosteen trees, the height of the harvest past, and only a few green fruits left on the trees. Then we walked into a grove of durian trees -- the new GD (Galang Durian) 69 cultivar -- and into an experience to remember.

The trees were so full of fruit that some of them looked like Christmas trees. Each heavy, near-ripe durian was tied to the tree, so that the fruits would not fall (since they could then damage everything on the way down) but could instead be harvested at optimum stage. At that time the strings are cut, and each fruit cleaned (brushed with a *walis ting-ting*), weighed, recorded, and its stem marked with pentel pen. Mr. Angel Galang (formerly of Imus, Cavite) keeps careful watch over his trees and the fruit they bear, multiplying the best in the field, in order to keep the product improving.

His farm also has durian trees of the old type -- tall, towering, majestic, with the fruit so high up that they are impossible to reach. One must then wait for them to fall at their own time and grace. The GD 69's are lower, friendlier, and similar to the Thai Chani. One can look up to their tip-tops quite easily, with the prickly globes growing green-gold along the way. These new durians are, Mr. Galang points out, a bright yellow to orange inside, as against the native whitish-gray. Their edible portion goes up to 30%, as against the native 18-23%.

Mr. Galang opened one for us. He was not the expert, he said; his daughter was. He sliced along the ridges, twisted the fruit slightly, and it opened along a section, revealing flesh golden like butter. Soft and creamy it was, "like ice cream," someone ex-

claimed. And there was no smell, only an absolute rightness about being eaten in the shade of its own trees and leaves, under the Davao sun.

One of our group complained that he was eating too much, enticed by the flavor and the richness. Mr. Galang had a solution: eat mangosteen immediately after; for some reason one fruit eases the discomfort of the other. Another expressed fear about an after-smell. No problem, she was told by these experts of durian culture. We each took an empty locule, water was poured in, and we washed our fingers in it. No smell left. Can we take this on the plane? another asked. I remembered that years ago the nuns at a convent where we had given a seminar simply wrapped the fruit in damp, thick layers of newspaper, and we carried them guiltlessly on the plane in *bayongs*.

Mr. Galang cannot produce enough durian even for the Davao market. He harvests his fruit green-mature, allows them to spend three to five days ripening, and then peels and packages them in styropore trays -- so that you can see what golden wealth you're getting. At the fruit stalls, the vendors will also open fruit for you on approval. The rejected fruits, says Cholong Lorenzo, account for all the durian candies in the markets. Mitos Lorenzo, his wife, makes the best durian candy I've ever tasted -- creamy durian caramels -- and also, from their own farm-grown mangosteen, the Plantation Mangosteen Jam that is to die for.

Davao is fruit country, blest indeed, and not only with durian, which was described by Alfred Russell Wallace in 1869 as being like "A rich butter-like custard highly flavoured with almonds . . . neither acid, nor sweet, nor juicy, yet one feels the want of none of these qualities, for it is perfect as it is."

Mangoes and Maytime

Time was when Maytime -- and only Maytime -- meant mangoes to the Filipino. One waited eagerly for the stately, spreading trees to be covered with small flowers. Ka Banong, a Malolos octogenarian, told us how those in charge of smoking the mango trees would begin gathering twigs, dried branches and leaves long before, and would practically live around the trees to carefully carry out the smoking, and thus bring on the blossoms. He himself was a rice farmer, but would attend to the *manggahan* in between rice crops in that serene and inevitable cycle of rural agricultural life. Mango trees flowered then only every other year, he said, and in the in-between year, the young green shoots -- called *putat* -- would come out, to presage a year of bloom. *Putat* could be eaten as a kind of salad, or *sawsawan*, and to our question whether picking it would hurt the tree, he answered: "Hindi naman siguro magtatampo ang puno -- hindi naman gaano ka rami ang nakakain ng tao." Feelings flowed between man and tree, in those halcyon times.

The mango cycle included marketing, which meant the arrival of a buyer, who looked over the flowering or fruiting tree, and offered a price for all of its expected yield -- about P2000 a tree, an uncle recalls. The consumer encountered the fruit in the markets, on dinner and fiesta tables, and in Antipolo where it went inevitably with *suman*, with Hinulugang Taktak, with picnics, and in an earlier day, with journeys on *duyan* borne on the shoulders of strong men. For many, it meant baskets *(tiklis, kaing)* of the fruit brought green into the house, to be ranged under beds, there to ripen slowly and naturally in the friendly darkness (the fruit ripens faster when covered or kept in the dark). For young boys and school children, it was a time to work with

sungkit and slingshot, and gather for oneself some of the bounty surrounding -- with or without permission. For the owners of trees, it was a busy time of harvesting, selling, eating to one's fill, and making the too-small or too-ripe into mango jam and preserves.

It was also a time to make *burong mangga* aplenty, to eat in the mangoless months following, with fish or meat. Cristing Nepomuceno, a friend in Angeles, Pampanga, makes a crunchy, slightly sweet variety that family and friends find great for nibbling with drinks, as a pickle with food, and even as dessert — versatility of matter and mind. When we were young, we ate the sour ripe mangoes with milk and sugar because, sour or sweet, they were the essence of summer.

Manggang hilaw is special in its own right, crunchy and tart and irresistible. Charing Carlos Africa tells the story that when she was hurt in the shelling of Manila, and asked by an American doctor (who thought she'd had it) what he could do for her, she asked for *manggang hilaw* and *bagoong*. In the *sarswela* by Precioso Palma, "Paglipas ng Dilim," Act II opens with a song that is obviously not only about the fruit:

Anong sarap, inyong tikman
ang naritong manggang hilaw . . .
kapag inyong nasarapan
huy! nakakatulo ng laway.

Itong mangga, kapag mura
ay pangsakit ng sikmura
nguni't pag-abot sa dila
huy! mawawalan ka ng diwa.

Hala kayo't inyong tikman
itong aking manggang hilaw . . .
kapag inyong nasarapa'y
sisipsiping walang humpay.

Nguni't kung mamimihasang
kakain ng murang mangga . . .
wala kayong makikita
na tatanda pang dalaga.

Ang binatang makakain
nitong mangga kong maasim
sapilitang hahani'y
ang simbahan o ang bues . . .

Ang dalaga pag matikman
itong mangga kapag hilaw . . .
lilisan na sa magulang
kahit lihim pakakasal.

Today one hears complaints about mangoes forced to ripen chemically *(kalburo)*, and therefore changed in taste and texture. But one also has mangoes all year round, from Cebu, from Zambales, from Guimaras, from trees ripening in turn, in and out of the traditional season. It also means that those marvelous green-mango-vendors who peel the fruit like flowers opening, and deposit them in plastic bags with *bagoong* to complement *inihaw na dalag* or *plapla*, can ply their trade almost all year round.

Others complain that the extra-large *kalabaw* or *piko* mangoes are no longer available to the local consumer, being mainly sold to hotels and restaurants, or exported -- and thus found in the fruit stalls of Hong Kong, still sold even when shrivelled by time and exposure. To balance that, one finds the professional or foreign chefs working with mangoes in new ways -- with shrimps or crabmeat, with duck or vegetables, in tortes and tarts and crepes, in salads and soufflés, even with raw fish or as osterized green mango juice. Prices are much higher, of course, and this may be a good thing for the sellers, who are unfortunately not usually the growers; certainly they benefit most the many middlemen between them and us.

These days mango is served in almost all restaurants, with pride and imagination. It comes cherry-adorned, or cut in small trapezoids and pushed up to make a flowerlike offering. It comes with the seed peeled, a knife or fork stuck in to make a handle. It comes aflame, or on a bed of ice. But we wager that the mango memories of many a Filipino still revolve around fruit ripening to fragrance in Maytime; around fat golden halves dripping their juice on glistening *suman* in Antipolo; around mangoes peeled whole with the hands on farms and at fiestas (*vaquero* fashion, we used to say) to drip on chin and clothes; around mangoes

chilled in river water rather than in refrigerators, while the feasters-to-be swim in the rivers of childhood; around mangoes sweet because stolen from consenting uncles or neighbors; around the fruit not as commercial product, but as pledge of time and season and memory.

Salty and Sour, Bitter and Sweet: Philippine Flavorings

Doña Josephine M stands in her high-tech, tastefully decorated, and tremendously well-equipped kitchen in Quezon City, fanning the fumes from the pot towards her nose, and telling her daughter: "The *patis* is still uncooked," which means that the saltiness is not right, the dish is not done, the flavor is not yet as it should be, time and heat will take it to perfection.

Inteng Lobaton, former fisherman, sits in the prow of a boat in Sagay, making into *kinilaw* whatever the diver brings up from the sea: a small sea cucumber, a sea urchin, a giant clam, a crab, an abalone. Kinilaw is generally made with vinegar (although it may have lime juice), because its glory is the transformation from rawness through brief contact with sourness, from translucent to almost-opaque, to that stage when it is no longer uncooked, but the freshness is kept primal. Yet Inteng prescribes a different treatment for each kinilaw. For one, brief marination in vinegar with crushed ginger (a smarting sourness). For another, chopped scallions, ginger and chili are dropped into the vinegar before the seafood is mixed in -- a mediated sourness. The sweet crab flesh, he asks us to dip morsel by morsel in vinegar into which he has shaken a few chili seeds -- "Dip quickly and eat," he says. It is sweet, touched by hot and sour. Each sourness is different.

Mr. Napoleon Amor, restaurant owner, is shopping in the Tacloban City Public Market. Confronted by a constellation of *bagoong* -- the fermented fish sauce/paste that is used as relish, as condiment, even as viand -- he makes his choices among those made with tiny shrimps, or tiny fish, or tiny oysters; those with the seafood still whole and recognizable, and those where they are fermented down to a thick liquid. All are salty; each is different.

Four flavors dominate the Philippine palate and thus the food repertoire: salty, sour, sweet and bitter -- *alat, asim, tamis, anghang*. Like prisms they refract taste into hundreds of flavors, into a spectrum of nuances, into similarities and differences too numerous to enumerate, into a scale of subtleties, with each note proper to a specific tune. With these flavors, created by an array of flavorings, all of Philippine taste is orchestrated.

SALTINESS / *ALAT*. In an archipelago of more than 7,000 islands, salt is a prime necessity. Fish are plentiful in season, and when the catch is in excess of the day's or the market's need, the rest must be salted to preserve it for leaner days. The fish are salted -- and usually dried in different ways, depending on the size, texture and flavor of the fish. Some are salted whole, and called *tuyo*. Others are cut open down the back, then salted *(daing)*. Still others are packed in layers of rock salt, in what Ilonggos call *binuro* and Cebuanos *tinabal*. The tiny *danggit (siganid)* are not salted at all, because the sea water has already given them a gentle salting. They are split open, sometimes deboned, and then dried briefly *(daing na danggit)*. The baby sole *(palad, lobo-lobo)*, about as large as 25-cent pieces, are laid out, layered like playing cards and salted in mats. The Visayan *lamayo* is made by salting fish slices lightly and drying only for a day. As a result the type, intensity and flavor of saltiness in each case is different, and call for different cooking methods. *Tuyo* are fried, and often individually dipped or soaked in vinegar before eating. *Daing* may be treated the same way, or else cooked with vegetables, for which they provide salt and textural contrast. *Binuro* is usually moist, the salt melting into brine, and it is so salty that it must be cooked in vinegar. *Lamayo* is fried plain. *Daing na danggit* and baby sole are fried crisp, and eaten as *pulutan* with drinks, or with garlic-fried rice at breakfast, because the seawater saltiness is mild.

Salt -- made from saltbeds where seawater is allowed to dry and leave a residue, or by boiling seawater -- is the salting and flavoring agent in the above methods, and the intensity and manner are tuned to the type of fish, and produce differences in saltiness and taste. Salt is also used in most cooking processes -- sprinkled into stews and over sautéed vegetables, rubbed over fish for frying or chickens for roasting, and into the stomach cavities of pigs for

spit-roasting *(lechon)*. It is not, however, the only salting agent, since *patis* and *bagoong* are also used that way.

Patis (*nuoc mam* in Vietnamese, *nam pla* in Thai, *petis* in Indonesian) is a thin sauce made from fish. The small fishes that do not fetch good prices in the markets are used to make it, the simplest method being to put them in large earthen jars with salt and keep them there till fermentation produces a liquid that is then drained from the jar. The best patis is not fishy in smell at all, but amber-colored and aromatic, with only a faint suggestion of its source.

In the Philippines, it is usually used as a dip -- for boiled vegetables, for boiled meats, but it can also be sprinkled on the food or the rice on one's plate. Its purpose is to salt as well as to flavor. It is the diners' way of fine-tuning the dish to their own individual tastes, their participation in the preparation of the food.

Patis may also be used in the cooking process. A sautéed vegetable dish is, old cooks say, made more delicious when flavored with patis instead of salt, because the patis adds not just saltiness but its own flavor, which changes subtly when "cooked" (allowed to transform in the process, some of its fish-taste evaporating in the fumes, some staying to flavor).

Most sautéed vegetable dishes are done the same way: brown some garlic; add sliced onions and cook till translucent; add tomatoes and cook till soft; add shrimp and/or pork bits for flavor *(sahog)*; when soft add liquid (water, shrimp head juice, or pork broth) and then season with pepper, salt and/or patis. After the patis is added, the liquid is allowed to boil, and only then are the vegetables (e.g. white gourd, string beans, bittermelon, squash, etc.) added, when the flavors have melded.

Patis as flavoring "indigenizes" the dish, and some Filipinos sprinkle it even on foreign dishes, or carry bottles of patis when they travel, to "tame" the alien to their taste.

Bagoong is a paste of salted, fermented shrimps or fish. The tiny shrimps or fish (again, those not of commercial size) are mashed with salt (in Guinhalaran, Negros Occidental, this used to be done in *bancas* on the seashore, with the boatmen mashing them with their feet and paddles, somewhat as grapes used to be crushed for wine), and then allowed to ferment (*bati*, in Ilonggo) till ready. The stage of readiness depends on the region and the purpose. Bagoong can be made in one's kitchen, in a jar, and be ready in a few days.

The type Visayans call *guinamus* is dark and pasty, with hardly any liquid, and is sold in cubes and blocks, and therefore needs to be completely drained and dried.

Bagoong is even more versatile as flavoring than is patis. It can be eaten as it is, uncooked, with rice, thus serving as viand. It can be sautéed with pork bits or rinds, and used as a *sawsawan* (dip) or relish, for example with the stew called *kari-kari* (oxtail and/or feet, vegetables, and a peanut sauce), which is unimaginable without it. It can be sauteed with onions and chilis, and used to accompany fried or stewed fish (e.g. *sinigang*). It can be cooked into the Visayan mixed-vegetable dish called *laswa*, where it is both the salting/flavoring ingredient and the protein component. In the Ilocano *pinakbet*, in which okra, eggplants, *ampalaya* (bittermelon) and tomatoes are steamed with *bagoong*, all the ingredients are layered in the pot, which is placed on the fire and shaken at intervals to mix up the ingredients, and allow them to steam evenly in the flavoring bagoong. When the poor man has nothing to go with his rice, he may have just bagoong with it, although even the non-poor may have bagoong with rice by choice. He is truly poor who does not have even bagoong, but only salt to flavor his rice.

In all the above cases, bagoong salts, but also contributes its own distinct, sought-after flavor. (Filipinos in the U.S. are always being found out by customs inspectors, trying to smuggle bagoong in their luggage, or are the subject of complaints by their neighbors in apartment houses, for bagoong, or tuyo, or daing frying is a noticeably alien smell in an American setting.)

The flavors of bagoongs vary according to the principal ingredient and the length and manner of fermentation. The most common bagoong is made of shrimps *(alamang)* or of fish. The version made in Balayan, Batangas is so well known that it has given its name to the genre, and thus fish bagoong is often called Bagoong Balayan. With a squeeze of *calamansi* juice, it is the only and proper sauce for *inihaw na maliputo* (the rare cavalla from Lake Taal, coal grilled). The people of Balayan say, however, that the best of their bagoong is a smooth liquid into which every single spine and bone has been melted by time and salt.

Bagoong can also be made of tiny oysters, mussels, and clams. In Dipolog, Zamboanga del Norte, and in Capiz province, it is made from fish lights -- just as the Roman *garum* was. One can therefore imagine the nuances of saltiness, and the variations of flavor possible in the kinds of bagoong found on all the 7000 islands of the Philippines.

Saltiness is high on the Filipino's taste preferences, because all his food is eaten against the bland background of rice. Unlike some of their fellow Asians, Filipinos do not flavor their rice with coconut milk or condiments (except when they fry cold leftover rice with garlic or *kalkag* -- tiny dried salted shrimps -- for breakfast).

We usually cook it only in water -- sometimes with a screwpine *(pandan)* leaf tucked in, or a banana leaf lining the clay pot, for fragrance. Rice is steamed plain, and is the perfect background for a salty fish or sauce. The historical combination of these two -- rice and salted/salty fish -- has created one of the Filipino flavor principles: saltiness, especially that associated with fish and fish products.

SOURNESS / *ASIM*. *Sinigang*, the stew of fish, or shrimps, or meat in sour broth, may be the Filipino national stew, indigenous to the country, and found in almost every province, under different names and regional variations. When one asks a cook: "Is the sinigang done?" one is really asking if it is sour enough. The confirmation should be: "Katamtaman lang," which means that the sourness is just at the right point -- sour enough to savor, to make the lips pucker and the eyes squint slightly, and yet not too sour -- just at the point of perfection.

That is the point of sourness Tagalogs prefer. Cebuanos, however, want in their *tinola / tinowa / towa* a milder kind of sourness. Tinola is often served at breakfast, and for this is desired a very fresh fish, a broth mildly soured with tomatoes, the counterpoint of some scallions and/or a few vegetables, not the rich mixture of *kangkong*, eggplants, stringbeans, radishes, etc. in the Tagalog *sinigang*.

Aside from the scale of sourness, there are also differences brought about by the flavorings (souring ingredients) used. There is no listing as yet of all the many sour fruits / leaves / flowers in the landscape that have been used to sour sinigang. The most frequently used is green tamarind fruit. This is boiled and mashed, and then added to the broth. (Tamarind, incidentally, is also sugared and made into a sour candy.)

Sinampalukang manok, however, which is a sinigang of chicken, is flavored only with young tamarind leaves and buds -- no fruit.

These are used only with chicken, as beef and pork call for the stronger flavor of the fruit. Many cooks believe that fish sinigang should be flavored not with tamarind (although it may be, and often is) but with *kamias (averrhoa bijimbi)*, because its type of tartness is suited to the mildness of fish-flesh. The late Leny Guerrero Joven, who came from a family famous for its cooking, had a special *sinigang na baboy* (pork) soured with green pineapple and *alibangbang* leaves, a felicitous combination. Bulakeños use at different times and with different ingredients guavas (e.g. with wild boar), tiny mango leaf shoots, green mangoes, santol, or various wild fruits and leaves for souring; the Ilonggos favor *batuan*, which is hard and green, with a single seed.

Perdigon Vocalan of Angono sets out in a boat on Laguna de Bay lake, headed for the fishponds, armed with what he calls *panuka* (literally vinegar-making, or souring ingredients) -- tomatoes, tamarind, limes -- to respond to whatever may be encountered in the fish pens. When nothing else is available, tomatoes will do, and in extreme necessity, calamansi (the native lime), but not vinegar. Souring with these two, however, is abysmal poverty of mind, because the Philippine landscape is so rich in wild, natural sour flavors. Packaged sinigang mixes are not much used in the Philippines; they are for Filipinos abroad who do not have access to the landscape.

Sourness also comes from vinegar, of course, and the Filipino preference is for palm or cane vinegar as flavoring. All the others, that come in bottles from factories and the supermarket, are only reluctantly used for *adobo*, kinilaw and *paksiw*, because they did not come pristine from the land from which their complements come, and their flavors betray this.

Paksiw is usually fish cooked in vinegar, garlic, ginger, and peppercorns. The many varieties of paksiw from wet to dry (the Ilonggo *pinamalhan*) not only confirm the use of vinegar for preservation in pre-refrigeration days, but also attest to the Filipino predilection for sourness as flavor. Large cans filled with fish paksiw are routinely loaded on boats and sent from the Visayas to Mindanao, for all the Boholano / Cebuano migrants missing their fish, their vinegar, their paksiw.

Lechon, or roast pig, which is the archetypal fiesta dish, is cooked into *paksiw na lechon* the day after -- all the leftover meat, bones, and liver sauce cooked with vinegar, bay leaves, peppercorns, and a touch of sugar. Many declare themselves more addicted to the paksiw than to the lechon. Pork hocks are also made into *paksiw na pata*, with dried banana blossoms *(kinchamsay)* as garnish.

Adobo, which foreigners consider the quintessential Philippine dish since it is found in all homes, Filipino restaurants at home and abroad, and even in hotel outlets (as the token Philippine dish), is based on sour-stewing too: in vinegar, garlic, bay leaves, and peppercorn. Soy sauce is a latter-day addition. *Adobong baboy* (pork), *manok-at-baboy* (chicken and pork), *pusit* (squid), *kangkong* (swamp cabbage), etc. are all cooked in vinegar, and therefore sour -- although much less sour than paksiw or sinigang.

This is what made Raymond Sokolov advance the theory that the Philippine adobo was not derived from the Mexican *adobado* as was believed, but was a native dish that the Spaniards called adobo because it was similar to their *adobado* (meat cooked in wine and onions). In the 1613 dictionary of Pedro San Buenaventura, *kinilaw* is called "adobo de los naturales" (the native adobo).

Vinegar is the principal flavoring for *kinilaw*, which Filipinos call *niluto sa asim* -- cooked in sourness. As earlier described, it is a cuisine of freshness, in which vinegar (*suka* in Tagalog and Ilokano, *sukam* in Pampango, *silam* in Ibanag and Ivatan, *langgaw* in Hiligaynon, *tuka* in Panggasinan) is the indispensable other, only absent when the fish or shellfish is absolutely fresh (live in a net, fresh from the sea), or sometimes mixed with lime juice. Always, it must be vinegar from a local, proximate source -- nipa *(nypa fruiticans)* or coconut palm predominantly, sugarcane, and occasionally buri *(Corypha elata)* or other palms (*pugahan, Caryota rumphiana* or fishtail palm; *idyop, Arenga pinnata* or sugar palm), made in the barrio, town or province.

This home-made product from home-grown plants is the vinegar, kinilaw makers and consumers say, that is of the right sourness, strength and flavor. *Sukang Iloko*, the dark Ilocano vinegar which is also known as a curative for fevers and headaches, and also used to empower a cleansing steam for women after childbirth, is famous for its sour potency which is *"matapang pero manamisnamis"* -- strongly sour, but with a hidden sweetness.

These native vinegars are often described not only as sour — but also as sweet, pure, clear. Vinegar as we mention in our book *Kinilaw*, is multi-functional in kinilaw:

"It "cooks" -- its acetic acid mediating the change from raw fish / seafood / meat into kinilaw. It can overcook, if the flesh is left to marinate too long, and become hard and opaque. It can cook to the point, when it only takes the translucence a subtle step further, into kinilaw perfection.

"It flavors, the strong sourness with its undercurrent of sweetness providing counterpoint to the *tamis* of fresh flesh, and the accents of onion, ginger, lime, *sili*, or any of the other condiments with which Filipinos bless their kinilaw.

"Finally, it binds; flavor to flavor, undertones to accents, sweetness to sourness, sea-freshness to land to table."

The predominance of sourness in these major pan-Philippine dishes -- sinigang, paksiw, adobo and kinilaw -- indicates that sourness (principally vinegar-sourness) is definitely a major flavor principle in the Philippines, and that the flavorings that enable it are legion.

BITTERNESS / *PAIT*. This is a flavor principle concentrated in -- but not limited to -- the Ilocos region, which has a less-than-bountiful soil best suited to tobacco, and hardy, ascetic, frugal people who are the country's best-known migrants (to Hawaii, to California, to Chicago, to Mindanao).

Bitter flavors are found in other regional cuisines too: the bitterness of *ampalaya* (bittermelon) is accepted and desired by most Filipinos. Ampalaya, sliced and then squeezed in salt to remove the edge of bitterness, is usually sautéed with pork and shrimps, sometimes with the addition of beaten eggs, or made into a salad with tomatoes and onions, or cooked Chinese style with salted soy beans and/or beef.

It is only the Ilocanos, however, who have a dish called *papait*, made bitter by the addition of such flavorings as bile, the semi-digested grass within a goat's intestines that is squeezed out *(pinespesan)*, and an organic substance found in the intestines. Papait is a type of *kinilaw* (*kilawin* to Tagalogs; *quilayen* to Pampangos; *kilawen* to Ilocanos), of meat (beef, goat, dog) rather than fish. In a piece on the "Ilocos Norte Mystique," Edilberto N. Alegre describes it and its special flavoring in *Kinilaw*:

"The Ilocanos know when to have their kilawin -- in the morning when meat is freshest, since animals are butchered at dawn.

"And they all prefer it with *papait*, the organic bitterness that comes from the innards of herbivores -- from bile, from a particular intestinal fluid, from almost digested grass. Of course, dogs do not have an ample supply of bile, for they do not eat grass.

"Bile bitterness has a basic layer of sweetness: after the initial invasion of *pait* on the tongue's surface comes a quiet lap of sweetness. But the bitterness from the *papait* that comes from a part of the intestines, woven as it were into a portion of the organ itself -- that is truly, solely *mapait*. That too, however, is limited in amount. So one squeezes the last remnant of the grass digested in the stomachs of goats and cows for the last drop of *pait*. The bitterness is organic to the body of the herbivores. It is added to the dish only when it is about to be eaten -- even *papait* is sweet when fresh.

"Skin, flesh and liver in *sukang Iloko* and/or kalamansi, onions, and ginger. The condiments are not unusual. But the addition of liver is, and its softness enriches the texture of soft skin and flesh. Above all, the addition of *papait* is what makes these *kilawen* distinctly Ilokano. Ilokanos do not seek it only in meat kilawen, for some seek it even in fish, and of course in the representative Ilokano vegetable stew, *pakbet*, in which the bitterness derives from *ampalaya*, called bittermelon because the slightly bitter skin encloses the sweet succulence of melon. Many especially prefer the sweetish bitterness of the small native ampalaya, charcoal-broiled. "Bittersweet" is deep in the Ilokano ethos.

"*Pait* is a dominant but not a singular taste in Ilokano cuisine. It is antithetic to *asim*, with which it is never associated in the same dish. It goes well with saltiness -- and so it does not clash with the proverbial Ilokano love for *bagoong*. However, this is how it is related to sweetness: one does not taste the bitter and the sweet at the same instant; rather it is the longer-lasting spread and overspread of bitterness first, then the brief underlay finishing of sweetness.

"Thus, *papait* must be fresh; ampalaya must be newly harvested and just charcoal-broiled -- for closeness to source insures this sequence. Ilokano *pait* is the dominance of harshness in the environment and harshness in life, but also, it is the short but final sweetness that ends this long bitterness.

"And so the Ilokanos begin their day not with *mapait na kilawin*, but with *kilawin na may papait* -- as a confirmation of a way of seeing, a way of living a credo."

SWEETNESS / *TAMIS*. The obvious sweetness is that found in foods or dishes sweetened with sugar. Since sugar has been a major Philippine export since the 19th century, the use of sugar — brown or refined -- is widespread. The sweets often seen on Philippine tables, however, are predominantly Spanish: *leche flan* (creme caramel), *tocino del cielo* (tiny sweet egg custards), *canonigo* (meringue in butter sauce), *ensaimada* (sugared rolls), etc.

The native desserts lean towards fruit (the sweets of the landscape) preserved in syrup: *macapuno* (coconut), and guava shells, pomelo, lime and santol rinds, *kondol* -- most of them *bordado* (embroidered) -- carved and incised in floral and other patterns.

There are as well the rice cakes and snacks that are special enough to mark festivals, and ordinary enough to be found in markets at breakfast time: *suman, kutsinta, bibingka, puto*. When not actually sweetened with sugar, they are dipped or rolled in sugar, or sprinkled with mixtures of sugar-and-coconut (or just grated coconut, which has its own sweetness), sugar-and-sesame seed, etc.

Although desserts, cakes and sweets are not as high on the consciousness as they might be in other countries, therefore, a sweet -- *postre, panghimagas* -- after a meal is within the tradition. The sweetness is produced by sugar in its various forms -- the raw *panocha* molded in coconut shelf halves with its dark sweetness, molasses which is even darker in taste, and brown and white sugar from sugarcane.

There is another sweetness, however, that Filipinos speak of with approbation, even with longing -- the slight, mild sweetness to be found in non-dessert foods. *Manamis-namis*, we say of a fruit that teases sweetly rather than assaults with its sweetness -- like a papaya at the right stage of firmness, or certain varieties of banana, or young coconut at a precise stage of softness, or even a very fresh heart of palm *(ubod)*, a shrimp leaping up in a plate ("jumping shrimp"), or a fish just out of the water and made into kinilaw. *Manamis-namis* is a subtle, fresh sweetness, hidden in the food's essence, tasted after and within sourness or bitterness, a flavor principle learned by the Filipino from his environment, and one invisible perhaps to the non-native. This is even more to be treasured than outright sweetness.

A flavor footnote must be added by the mention of *pakla*. Not a flavoring but a flavor -- or perhaps lack of it -- this has no

translation in English, perhaps because the taste is not desirable or even known to those within that culture. *Pakla* is the taste of a green banana, and it is not quite acrid, or sour. It is *mapakla*, and it is the right taste to make into such dishes as *nilupak*, where it is pounded with coconut and made into a cake; or *pinasugbo*, in which it is dipped in molasses. It is not a greatly desired flavor, but it is recognized and appreciated, and its uses are known.

Although ginger and chili might conceivably be called flavorings since they contribute flavor, in this essay I have taken them as contributors to and enhancers of the basic flavors: salty, sour, bitter and sweet, and thus companions to the flavorings.

In sum, therefore, the Filipino flavor principles are drawn from the flavors and flavorings available on the land. Saltiness we are born to, because we are surrounded by sea water, which yields the fishes as well as the means to preserve them. Saltiness is not only practical but desirable, because it is counterpoint to the blandness of the rice that is our basic food, our staff of life. It is available in many ways and in many subtleties -- because of the ways and times of salting, because of the range of flavorings -- *patis* in all its grades and uses, *bagoong* in all its forms.

Sourness is practical as well, since it preserves food, which can then be served hot or cold. Sour soups have also been found to be cooling in hot weather. Sourness is the flavor of major Philippine dishes like kinilaw, paksiw, sinigang and adobo. And sour flavorings abound in leaf, fruit and bole, to temper, mediate, accompany, contrast, provide different dimensions to the dishes that we like soured.

Bitterness, with its underlay of sweetness, is the special discovery of the Ilocano. The flavorings for it come from the animal: bile, *pinespesan*, and the nameless juice within the intestines. In the last ten years, *papait* has travelled out of the Ilocos, and is now seen in non-Ilocano restaurants and drinking places. An appreciation for *pait* grows slowly but surely, and although it started, as Alegre says, as the gastronomic statement of the Ilocano ethos, it has crept into the Filipino consciousness.

Sweetness is not only to be savored in the multitudes of sweets, cakes and desserts indigenous and indigenized, but also in the subtle flavors Filipinos appreciate: the gentle sweetness of fruit,

vegetables, seafood; a sweetness that comes from the food's essence, and not from any flavoring.

Salty, sour, bitter or sweet, all the flavorings may be called *matamis na ala-ala*, sweet remembrances, being legacies from nature.

People and Places

PATIS PAMINTA ASIN SUKA SILI

Inside Information: A Tribute to Mothers

Who can think of foods without thinking of mothers? There is "mother's cooking," with the legend and the lore of which, all brides have to compete. There are all the starters — for dough, for *nata*, for vinegar even — which are complimented with the name "mother," because they get life and goodness started and continuing. There are all the recipes labelled "mother's" — homemade apple pie, hearty chicken soup, special *ensaimada*, farm-made guava jelly, secret remedies — all understood to be special, irreplaceable, a precious heritage.

The same thing could be said of "grandmother's" anything. Of course it is great, rare and wonderful, because *lola* is a mother's mother, as well as one's own mother two ages away.

All of us have memories of tastes and experiences, food habits and information, that can be directly credited to mothers. "I remember" — one begins, and out it pours: how Mother used to make leche flan from carabao's milk with rind of *dayap*; how Mama showed me, on the farm during the war, how to make longganiza — drying and blowing out the pork intestines, chopping, mixing the meat and spices, stuffing fat the long sausages and dividing them with string. Or how Inay made *buro* — or chocolate cake, or Food for the Gods, or how Nanay fed us *lugaw*, or unborn chicken eggs in *tinola*, when we were sick. Or *champurado* on rainy days. Or chicken *inasal* on sunny days. Or how Mommy labored over sugar roses for birthday cakes for our birthday parties.

How many of our food memories are connected with our mothers? An Austrian anthropologist I met developed a whole scholarly paper on how mothers determine the food culture of nations. They not only decide on the food we eat, but by cooking

it, decide on its particular nuances or register of taste. They not only decree how much of it we should eat, they decide when and in what way, thereby determining the food patterns of our lives — and eventually of the race. They not only impose rules ("Eat all your vegetables, or else . . ."), but also rewards ("If you take this castor oil like a good girl, you can have candy afterwards") — and thus influence what we value and what we dislike. From day to day, they feed us; on special occasions they feed us, and from this we know what is *pang-araw-araw* and *pang-fiesta*. It is their example of daily unspoken devotion; their lifelong washing/cleaning/cooking that becomes the model for their daughters — and indirectly for their son's wives.

Our ideas therefore of taste and value; of nutrition and menus; of like and dislike; of time and occasion; of cooking and homemaking; of the ordinary and the special — all are influenced by our mothers. A tribute then, spangled and with trumpets, to our mothers and all they taught us!

There is, aside from all the above, the heritage of skills and secrets passed on by mothers to daughters and sons. So many of the women and men who cook, first learned from their mothers. Some were forced, and were grateful afterwards. I was not forced, but the goodwill and skill with which my mother, Dr. Alicia Lucero Gamboa, baked cakes and cookies, made *galantina* and *longaniza*, enticed me into the kitchen — first to humbly slice onions and mash garlic, and then to be accorded the honor of frying the porkchops.

And then let us consider cookbooks. Although not all of them are written by mothers, many must have started out as mothers' or housewives' listings of the recipes they had cooked for their families with success. Lucky the daughters or sons who inherited these documents of love, for through them culture is passed on. Remember Enriqueta David Perez's *Recipes of the Philippines*, a lasting guide by the mother of Jingjing, Spanky, and Father Bobby Perez? She is gone, but the book lives on, reprinted year after year till the pictures have faded — but the recipes have not.

And recall too, *Everyday Cookery for the Home* (1930) by Ms. Sofia de Veyra (mother of Justice Jesus and Professor Lourdes V. Sevilla) and Ms. Ma. Paz Zamora de Mascunana — in English and Spanish — with all the hints about health and nutrition that the new scientific American age had brought into the home.

I read the enticing *An Invitation to Indian Cooking* (1973) by my friend, cooking expert, actress and TV personality Madhur Jaffrey of New York, and I find her mother behind the pages and in the acknowledgements: "I would like to gratefully acknowledge the help of the following — my grandmother, whose black lemon pickle opened my taste buds at an early age; my mother, who patiently gave me a two-year correspondence course in cooking . . ." She learned to cook, she writes, not from observation and practice in the family kitchen in Delhi, but "from recipes written on flimsy air-letters, mailed to me by my mother." As a teenager she hadn't cared much to learn, but later in England, homesick and longing for Indian food, she learned cooking from long motherly letters in Hindi.

Lin Yutang's wife and daughter, Tsuifeng and Hsiangju Lin, have a cookbook born of many years away from China. Lin Yutang introduces it as: "strictly the record of a family's cooking experience, handed down from a Chinese mother to her daughter, embodying the results of some 20 years of home cooking in America and abroad . . . For six months, off and on in the evenings, when the mother and daughter were not otherwise occupied, I heard the conversations going on in the next room. It was like a party recalling a hunting or fishing trip, or a trip to the Arctic . . . Not a book was consulted. It was what the psychologists call a total recall.

"The mother and daughter dug into their past culinary adventures, with many diversions and corrections, recalling how exactly it was done, and what mistakes there were to avoid. 'If you boil a vegetable in cold water, the result may be a delicious soup, but a tasteless vegetable.' 'After parboiling the vegetable in water, drench it under the cold water faucet; otherwise the process of heating goes on and the vegetable becomes soft and mushy.' Such delightful bits of inside information began to impress me; I was really convinced that the bringing forth of a perfectly cooked dish contained a mystery and a technique worth telling about. When the book was finished, I saw that, succinct as the directions are, every line was a distillation of a lifetime firsthand experience."

I especially love the book, *Family Recipes* by Purita Kalaw-Ledesma. First because Manang Purit is a favorite person — artist, art historian, relative and friend, who does everything artistically — cooking to living. Second because the book is indeed "inside

information" from her mother, Pura Villanueva Kalaw, who wrote her own cookbook, *Condimentos Inidigenas* (1918), her mother-in-law Consuelo Severino de Ledesma, and various aunts, great-aunts, and other relatives. (The book is designed by her granddaughter, Bettina Alessandra L. Gonzalez, graphic arts graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design.) And third because just reading the recipes, I can almost taste the heritage distilled through several lifetimes.

My proposal, in this remembrance of and tribute to mothers and their role in shaping, preserving and transmitting food culture, is: Let us, all who can, gather from our mothers the inside information: the cooking skills, lore and information (recipes) that they preserve. Let us write them down, if not for publication, at least for ourselves, our brethren, our children and their families. All that would add up to a delicious record of our familial culture, and a document of mother-love and woman-power.

Here now are some mother-recipes, all of them sweet.

Enriqueta David Perez's PINIPIG ICE CREAM. 1 cup pinipig (green variety); 8 cups evaporated milk; 2 egg yolks; 2 cups sugar. Scald milk and stir in the beaten yolks and sugar. Add pinipig and cool mixture. Pour into scalded can and freeze.

S.R. de Veyra's and M.P.Z. Mascunana's HONEY MOUSSE. 4 eggs; 1 pint cream (whipped); 1 cup hot, delicately flavored honey. Beat the egg slightly. Pour the hot honey slowly over them. Cook until the mixture thickens. When it is cool, add the whipped cream. Put in freezing compartment of the refrigrator for 6 hours, or pack in 3 parts ice to 1 part salt.

Pura Villanueva Kalaw's JALEA DE CALABAZA. 1/4 squash, peeled and sliced; 2/3 pound sugar. Boil the squash in water; then remove from liquid. In a plate, mash it with a fork till smooth. Add the sugar to the cooking water; add the mashed squash, leaving it on the fire till it reaches the desired thickness. If one wishes, thick coconut milk can be added three minutes before removing the *jalea* from the fire.

Purita Kalaw Ledesma's CORN ALUPI (NATIVE CORN PUDDING). 3 cups grated or scraped young corn; 1 tall can evaporated milk; 2 eggyolks, beaten; 1 cup sugar; 1/2 cup water; 2 whole eggs, beaten; 1/4 cup melted butter; corn husks (the soft inner leaves). Mix all the ingredients together. Make the individual alupi thus: Put about 2 tablespoons of the corn mixture in each corn husk,

wrap and tie it up to form a small bundle. Line the bottom of a saucepan with scraped corn cobs, and add enough water to almost cover the cobs. Place the wrapped corn packages on top of the cobs but not touching the water. Heat the water until steam forms, and steam the alupi for 15 to 20 minutes, or till it is firm to the touch. Unwrap and serve hot.

On Unperceived Excellences

Today I feel like paying tribute to housewives, who should never be described as "plain," since they are anything but. The word "plain" always carries a hint of apology about it, as if being confined to wifing, mothering and housekeeping and not having a glamorous office job or a starry profession (e.g. writer, actress) makes a woman less worthy of praise and emulation. Yet the housewives -- fulltime or part-time -- are the backbone of the nation, the bearers and shapers of Philippine culture.

Not only do they feed and care for their breadwinners and the growing minds and bodies of their children; they also teach habits of work and thrift, impart values and attitudes towards fellowman, home and country, and give the emotional and moral support that is the secret of Filipino relationships. Virtue, continuity, loyalties, and all such, are borne from generation to generation on their day-to-day generosity. If full-time, they do all this while being called "plain," while being denied intelligent conversation, room for growth, credit for their labors. If part-time, they shoulder man-sized jobs outside the home, and when they return are still expected to be responsible for everything in the home -- even the missing *patis* on the dinner table. When men stop to think, they acknowledge that the Filipina has long ceased to be -- probably never was -- the weaker sex.

In the realm of cookery, women are not only creative, but steady and persevering. Men often make great chefs -- in home kitchens, in restaurants, in culinary history. But face it, now -- the women do most of the day-to-day hack work of marketing, budgeting, bargaining, chopping, slicing, storing, meal-planning, cooking, setting tables, feeding families, packing *baon*, cleaning up the baby's mess, washing the dishes (how many times in a lifetime are the same old dishes washed?), storing and recycling the leftovers.

Just from the number of man-hours -- excuse me, woman-hours -- they spend on the job, it is obvious that they must have been largely responsible for the shaping of Filipino cuisine. They adapted the pancit from the Chinese noodle; they figured out economical ways of making Spanish dishes from native ingredients; they created dishes from cheap meat cuts *(dinuguan, bopis)*; they surely invented the "sideline," especially the accepting of orders for food cooked in their own kitchens.

This last activity has not only put extra food into the family market basket, but has also spread widely the bounty of those creative minds and hands confined to their homes. Bless housewives, indeed, and the modest excellences that issue from their kitchens.

ORIANG'S BANGUS. Ms. Gloria Lanot is the wife of a poet, Serafin Lanot, the mother of a poet, Marra Pl. Lanot, and the mother-in-law of a poet, Pete Lacaba. She is herself a poet of the kitchen, even though she started out teaching poetry at the piano, as a piano teacher. Somewhere along the way -- in the feeding of her family -- she discovered great fulfillment in cooking, and this enterprise has filled her days with adventure and discovery. When she is taken to a restaurant -- often by close family friend Nick Joaquin -- she doesn't rest until she has duplicated and improved the dishes she tasted -- in her own kitchen. She has thus added to her repertoire such items as French bread, Italian *canneloni*, and Spanish *callos*. The latter, and a dinuguan that is on the dry side *(tuyang sabaw)* are the favorite dishes of Nick Joaquin.

What I blessed Ms. Lanot for long before I even met her, however, was Oriang's Bangus, her bottled bangus sardines, which Pete gave me to try years ago. The bangus, as we all know, lends itself delightfully to preparation sardine-style. Its flesh is soft and succulent, and the only problem is an array of feathery spines found beneath layers of white flesh. Mayor Arsenio Lacson's recipe, published decades ago in the *Sunday Times Magazine*, has been what I personally have followed (with adaptations) -- olive oil, sliced dill pickles and carrots, chili peppers, peppercorns, bay leaves, salt and pepper and a hefty lacing of rum. I have even used large, full-size bangus, which became delicious from lip to fin, spines and all.

Ms. Lanot uses small bangus, heads and tails removed, and tiny *siling labuyo*. There are a number of other similar products on the market, some in bottles and some in cans, but I have found Oriang's Bangus the best from the points of view of the quality of fish and the blending of oil and chili flavors. Frankly, some other products are disappointingly bland; others have tasted slightly rancid because of the oil. Oriang's Bangus is unfortunately no longer available in supermarkets, because she found some of her bottles opened on the shelves -- by pranksters, or by competitors? -- and does not want to risk contamination of her careful product. So it is available at her little store, Oriang's, on Mother Ignacia Avenue, within walking distance from EDSA. She carefully dates her bottles, and has found the fish tasting good even after five years.

THE TAPA OF MS. DE LEON. We first read about this in Nancy Reyes' column and, with complete faith in her judgement, we rushed over to sample it. And fell headlong for it. It is the best tapa I have ever tried, in a life devoted to sampling tapa of all types (carabao, wild boar, deer; pork or beef; sweet or spicy; hard or soft; shredded or whole). Now my current secret "vice" is to have for breakfast a bowl of *sinangag*, an egg carefully fried with the yolk whole, some chopped red tomatoes, and two slices of Ms. de Leon's well-flavored tapa, with the ribbon of fat toasted just right for its hint of sweetness. I take the tapa in small strips (surely the way it was meant to be taken, when invented by some distant ancestress), savoring the contrasts of meat-boldness, rice fluffiness, egg moistness, and tomato sourness, and meditating on what kinds of lives our predecessors went out to, after such a breakfast.

Ms. de Leon is Raquel (Ms. Jorge) de Leon, whose home-cooking is available in a literal hole in her garden wall at 1694 M.H. del Pilar called Bibingka atbp. One rings a bell, and a maid emerges to look out through the grills to attend to the customer. The tapa -- made of excellent *tapadera* (sirloin) -- comes in half-kilo lots in a styrofoam container.

Still another product available is *dinuguan*, again one that drives us to superlatives. *Dinuguan* is one of Wili's favorite dishes, and in his passionate search for the perfect *dinuguan*, he sends out for it -- to restaurants, to friends' cooks and kitchens, to Pampanga! He has pronounced Ms. de Leon's version near perfection -- holding back the final accolade just in case one of these days he stumbles upon something better.

Her dinuguan is Pampango style -- light-colored, *masabaw*, with the blood in small chunks, mixed in with the *bituka, pecho, ulo* or perhaps just *tenga ng baboy*, sili, oregano, and other spices. Ms. de Leon turns out to have an office in her home, in which she runs the hacienda and subdivisions, rents out offices, etc. In fact, her cooking operation -- in which two daughters, including professional chef Bambina Herbosa, and a daughter-in-law are involved -- is run like an office. There is a master cook, and the five household maids are systematically rotated through the kitchen so that they all learn the family cooking ways, and presumably help in the business. Her recipes are her own, augmented by others inherited from her mother and her husband's grandmother, the famous Doña Luisa Lichauco.

Although her *dinuguan* is often ordered by banks for in-house parties, her bestseller is *bibingkang galapong*, which people buy in dozens to handcarry to the U.S. where, they've found, they can be frozen, then steamed and baked before serving. *Canelones* are also available, and by calling one hour ahead (59-73-87), your order can be put together for pickup, and therefore need not come from the freezer. There is, in fact, a long list of party and other food available -- all on order.

These are two of many creative, enterprising housewives in the country. With them begins, continues, persists, survives, and develops the Filipino cuisine that now fills our restaurants, our cookbooks, and our lives. How can such housewives be called "plain"? Surely they must be called at the very least ornamented (with talent and virtue), surely distinguished, definitely invaluable. When next you fill up a form for yourself, your mother, or your wife, write down "distinguished housewife," remembering and being grateful for your/their unperceived excellences.

Men in the Kitchen

Why are we so amazed when men cook, and when women can't? Because our culture has assigned to women the task of planning, preparing and serving meals, as a gender role, as part of their being women. And to men, it has assigned the task of winning the bread, earning the livelihood, braving the jungles of the workplace. So the woman who can't cook is apologetic, or defensive, while the man is proud: "I can't even boil water!" And the woman who cooks is matter-of-fact about cooking 90 or more meals a month, while a man is praised and lionized for one dish.

And yet cooking is just another talent, craft or art -- like writing, sculpting, singing, computer programming -- that is not tied to gender, but to the person.

In the writing and academic worlds, where I work and live, we are not too amazed when men can cook, because it is part of the non-standard -- sometimes eccentric -- lifestyles in which academics and writers flourish. We discussed with delight poet Krip Yuson's witty account of his house-husbandry -- cooking Guamanian and African dishes in between lines of poetry; running to various groceries in the neighborhood to whip something up before wifey comes home for lunch. "Typically 60s" is how Bien Lumbera described Krip's adventurous menus.

Father Jose Cruz, S.J., president of the Ateneo for 12 years and now principal of the high school, cooks *adobo* with a sauce of chicken livers, and once gifted me with a superlative apple pie he had baked. Those who know him are not surprised, because his family has a tradition of good cooking, and why should the son, priest though he be, not inherit it?

Other Jesuits joke about how they learned how to cook when they were sent abroad and had to cope with kitchens. Father Bert Ampil, S.J. (former president of Xavier School) claims a specialty called Hamburger a la Kitchen Sink, because it has everything in it -- wine, cheese, herbs -- but the kitchen sink. Father Jaime Bulatao, S.J. (Father Bu: psychologist, hypnotist, visionary of hidden worlds) claims that his specialty is Adobong Frankfurter -- surely visionary, too.

Dr. Bienvenido Lumbera, UP professor, literary historian, drama, film and literary critic, poet, author of such musical plays as *Tales of the Manuvu, Rama Hari, Bayani*, and *Ang Palabas Bukas*, guru of research in Philippine culture, and Magsaysay Awardee, operates in the kitchen as casually as he does in the realms of literature -- so casually that his four children consider it natural that both *Nanay* and *Tatay* should cook.

As an orphaned teenager, he recounts, he grew up with his godfather, who was well known in the community for his ability with *caldereta, leche flan, relleno* and *morcon* (their name for *embutido*). As his godfather cooked, he often watched, sometimes chopped the onions, sometimes cooked simple dishes like *sinaing na isda*, thus learning without conscious effort. The knowledge came in handy when he went to the U.S. for graduate school, and of course for the years of bachelorhood, when he became known in the university community (he was teaching at the Ateneo then) for being a good cook, and also for being *"pula-ero"* -- critical and discriminating about the taste of food.

A home-bred cook, he uses no recipes and is nonplussed when others ask for his. His method, he describes, is that of the native cook: *"tikim nang tikim,"* tasting and adjusting the dish as it cooks, flavoring its progress; *"ninanamnam,"* savoring it with tongue and lips and memory, recreating an exact, remembered taste. How can you put that in a recipe? He does remember a cookbook named *Aling Charing*, which refreshed his mind about dishes he had eaten ("mga kilalang pagkain"), acting like "crib notes" *(kodigo)* for his cooking.

He likes cooking "simple dishes like *sinigang na isda*," which has to have that precise sourness, *"umaagaw sa asim at alat,"* that can only be judged by the knowing tongue. *Minatamis na Saging*, a homespun dessert, which requires *saging na saba* at the perfect

stage of ripeness. Also *binagoongang baboy, adobo* and *ginataang mungo*, which in his hometown, Lipa, is called *binalatungan*. He especially likes the latter because "I like the smell of roasted mongo -- the smell is important to cooking -- and the pleasure of doing the dish is heightened by the memory."

Dr. Edilberto N. Alegre, on the other hand, used to be shooed away by his grandmother, who firmly believed that men did not belong in the kitchen. Eddy, whose Ph.D. is in Japanese language and literature, who writes poetry and fiction, and whose research is in Philippine culture, is my co-author for several books. He not only writes about food with incisiveness and insight, but can cook. "It melts in the mouth," his children say about a chicken dish he makes for their birthdays (marinate a cut-up chicken overnight in ginger, leeks, and soy; cook quickly in deep hot fat). So how did he learn? From necessity, he says, and from liking food/eating/dishes. "Only he who likes to eat," he says, "can learn to cook." Eddy recounts that as a young boy there was always his grandmother cooking for him and the family -- dishes she liked, like *burong isda*, dishes native to her province (Tarlac). As a married graduate student in Japan, there was his wife cooking for him. When he was not tended by lola or wife, then he learned how to cook. In Spain, he found that ox tongue was cheap in the markets, and so he made a stew -- *estofado* -- cleaning, scraping, and peeling the tongue himself. At another stage in his checkered life, he found himself responsible for the children's meals, and so he marketed in Nepa-Q-Mart, cooked all meals -- and washed up after.

"Cooking is not tedious," he concluded from the experience, "because you can create, and results are consumed. But washing dishes is tedious; you wash the same dishes so many times a day! Now I understand women better." The experience also made him understand the anatomy and sociology of the market so well that his piece "Anatomy of a Philippine Market" netted a beautiful letter of thanks ("Kayo lang ang nakakaunawa sa amin") and a basket of fresh fish and fruits from the Nepa-Q-Mart Vendors Association.

Dr. Florentino H. Homedo is the all-around authority on the history and culture of Batanes, his home province. Professor at the Ateneo Department of Filipino, he is a scholar and lecturer in such demand that he averages 200 or more lectures a year.

We fight for his chocolate and fruit cakes that are sometimes raffled off at university parties. Where did this bachelor learn how

to cook? First, there was an aunt in the Dominican order, whom he used to visit in Baguio. Then at 11 he went to high school away from home, living in a boarding house where students had to cook for themselves; and as a college student, he lived in his *ninong's* house, and helped around the kitchen.

It was not only necessity, however, that taught him cooking. Flor says it was the relaxing effect of cooking, which made him "come out of the pages of the book. It is nice to see things developing in front of you -- bread growing in the oven, etc." He sometimes stops research or writing at 3:00 a.m. To clear a stuffy head, to unwind, he goes down to the kitchen and bakes a cake, or experiments with dishes he has tasted or heard about (e.g. *sinardinas na bangus*), or with varieties of *adobo* (e.g. Ilocano, Pampango).

His cooking is, in fact, like the research which is the core of his academic life. When he tastes a dish and likes it, he pries into it with his fork, conjectures, analyzes. Then at home he tries to figure out cooking methods and ingredients, decoding, going backward, adjusting it to his taste -- and emerging with something new. His cooking is R & R & R -- research, rest, relaxation -- and fun.

Achie (Aquiles) Diaz de Rivera is twice retired: he was treasurer of Xavier School, an "alternative career" after retiring from many years with the Bank of the Philippine Islands. All his friends wait for the occasion when Achie cooks for them because he painstakingly brings together all the desired, proper ingredients ("*mukha ng baka*" for *callos*; the right sausages for *cocido*), spends hours in the kitchen, and derives great joy in their multiple servings and sighs of contentment.

Where did he learn? From his mother, Carmen Nava, and paternal grandmother, Rosa San Agustin, who spent long hours in the kitchen, especially when preparing for feasts like the Sta. Ana May 12 fiesta (Nuestra Señora de los Desamparados). He hung around, he listened, he chopped and sliced, he tasted, he remembered. *Mechado* and *estofado*, for example, are always cooked in the *paso*, a thick wide-mouthed *palayok* with handles, lined with *asad* (sugarcane skin). *Pochero*, the Sunday family dish, has beef shank, chicken, salt pork, chorizo, tomatoes, bananas, cabbage, potatoes and white beans. *Cocido* has almost the same ingredients but with green beans and garbanzos and no tomatoes; the meats, vegetables

and three sauces (tomato, *sawsawang talong, salsa monja*) are served separately. *Galantina, relleno* and *cabeza de jabali* -- he not only remembers them all, but has gone beyond his teachers to experiment and modify on his own. "My mother said that we had parted ways in cooking."

The other source of Achie's tastes and cooking, however, were the dishes experienced in restaurants to which his father took his only son. "I still remember vividly the taste and texture of the *paella* of Palma de Mallorca -- pale, slippery, different from any *paella* today." And the roast turkey and chicken salad of Tom's Dixie Kitchen; the Chinese food at Ramon Lee; the food at Plaza Lunch; and the spaghetti at the Sta. Ana Cabaret (Quezon's favorite), which his father would bring home for him.

Today Achie cooks all the family recipes and anything else he is interested in. He tries recipes from old Spanish coobooks, reconstructs dishes tasted elsewhere, experiments -- to the benefit of his friends, in whose kitchen he cooks, and of his aunt, still living in Sta. Ana, whom he visits on Sundays. In his bachelor's apartment he does not cook.

He makes *cocido*, which in Sta. Ana is served on two cocido platters (*lechon de leche* size) with the three sauces, the broth turned into *Sopa de Fideos*. The salsa monja or *ajete* is the "family signature recipe," acquired by his great grandfather (b. 1870) from the Poor Clares of Intramuros, whom he served as music master while working as organist of the church of St. Francis in Intramuros. Achie remembers his grandmother preparing the sauce, sitting on a *banig* on the floor, with all nine ingredients surrounding her as she chopped, tasted, adjusted -- *patikim-tikim*, etc., just as Bien does. He also makes his mother's "*estofado* with a Chinese touch" -- namely *sangke* and *toyo*. And *fabada*, and *pamplina*. But he does not make *plantanilla*, a sinfully rich dessert of *pastillas de leche* wrapped in crepes of pure egg yolk cooked in syrup.

"Eating and cooking," he says, "is the greatest joy, the splendor of living." And he quotes his grandfather's Spanish dictum, the equivalent of "Eat rich, die poor" -- but, presumably happy.

Why then, do men cook? Sometimes because they had role models, like godfathers; or mothers and grandmothers who taught them. Or because they had grandmothers who didn't teach them, with the result that they learned by themselves. Also because they

had reasons to cook for themselves -- as bachelors, fathers, priests. But especially because they found it fun, and expressive of their talents. Because, in sum, THEY DIDN'T HAVE TO COOK. Society didn't decree that they had to, and so for them it was not drudgery but creative and fulfilling. Perhaps that is why so many chefs are men.

Alta Cocina Filipina: Has it Arrived?

Haute cuisine, the height of the art of cooking: has it arrived on the Philippine scene? Two years ago, I was asked the question, and, looking through the fields where grow vegetables, the waters in which swim fish and other water creatures, the forests in which thrive game, the backyards where domesticated animals fatten, the markets in which all these become available, and the cooks and their kitchens, I felt that there could be, and "If we have not developed *haute cuisine* from that treasury of Philippine foods, it is because we have kept thinking of our food as *lutong bahay*, improvisatory and flexible, depending on what is available in the swing of the seasons and by the grace of God. It is because we have not thought of these home-grown, 'ordinary' food items as material for experimentation and adaptation, for professional food service, for serving on silver and crystal, for treating in *nouvelle* as well as traditional ways, for serving in restaurants and at banquets.

"We therefore have not demanded that they be available in our markets and at our doorsteps. If there were a market for *alibangbang* by the bushel some enterprising farmer would plant trees from Batanes to Tawi-tawi. If restaurants insisted on certain vegetables in season, someone would plant them, check quality, bundle and wrap them, and deliver them . . . In other words -- ask, and you shall almost surely receive all that you need for *dakilang pagkain* (great food), for *pinakamataas na uri ng pagluluto* (the highest *haute cuisine*)."

I wrote that for the menu some young chefs led by Gene Gonzalez were preparing for a Chaine des Rotisseurs dinner, and immediately they adopted the name, calling their foreign-trained, kitchen-wise and restaurant-experienced group Alta Cocina Filipina.

In 1991, the group, larger by then, invited us to sample another Diner Amicale, this time at Gene's as-yet unopened restaurant for fine dining, Gino's, beside Cafe Ysabel. The dinner featured *nouvelle* dishes that they had created like jazz -- each proposing a motif, the others jamming along, all improvising and creating with foods and seasonings local and foreign. Here's what they served.

In the garden, with the Kir-royal (Creme de Cassis and champagne) came a *pâté* of smoked catfish on puff pastry, Jamon Sulipeña (air-dried molasses-cured ham that Gene makes from an old family recipe) wrapped around mango balls, and a marine fish called *diyana, sashimi* style.

Once everyone was seated among the swags, murals, carpets and candles of Gene's new dining room, with music playing in the background, dinner started with two aperitifs: razor clams and scallops in Molo wrapper with *kasubha* and holy basil, and smoked *bayawak* with *pako* tendrils in a lemon-raspberry dressing. With this came a very pleasant American Chardonnay.

The wonderful soup was shyly announced by one of its two authors, Gabriel and Raphael Lim Soon, who ran Chez Gabriel in Greenhills. The savory stock (native chicken, pork leg, bit of ham, bit of pork skin) was truly enhanced by a piece of prime sharkfin, *bako* strips, and a superb *quenelle* of crab -- the whole thing served in half a *kundol*.

The central fish dish was created by Ed Quimson: a *roulade* of bangus belly and *mameng* (wrasse, also called parrot fish, *bungat, mulmul*) stuffed with *alagaw* leaf, guava and tamarind purée, with a sauce by Noel Silverio of tomato champagne *sabayon*. Superb was the miniature crayfish *flan* sitting on a *santol* and onion confit, also Ed's.

After a *kamias/balimbing* sherbet had cleared our palates, came the meat course: a tiny *tikling* bird stuffed with a ragout of tongue, ham and sweetbreads with a wild mushroom sauce, alongside ultra-tender rack of lamb herb-crusted in a *basi* glaze with *foie gras* and banana mushrooms, plus a tiny *lumpia* of julienned vegetables. As cross-cultural accompaniment: a Chateau la Fleur St. George 1986.

By that time, considering the breads circulating in native baskets, and the homemade carabao milk butter, we were all exclaiming that we could not manage another bite. But of course we did, since the desserts were: a terrine of dried Asian fruits,

cut like *tesserae* and arranged like a mosaic in aspic; a Kirsch-laden cream sauce; *ylang-ylang* parfait served in chocolate hearts; and a most sophisticated *turon na saging* by Henry Canoy, being wrapped in phylo pastry, and served with a mango and nangka sauce. With these: a Perrier et Jouet Belle Epoque Special Reserve 1985 Champagne.

To close the symphony there came florentines and chocolate truffles, coffee or tea, and of course, Filipino style, *pabaon*: mini-*bayong* of sweets and cakes to take home, since traditional Filipino feasting has guests taking the hospitality home to share with those left behind.

Fred Fricke, Chancellor of the Chaine des Rotisseurs, proclaimed himself proud and well pleased, because "The future of Philippine cuisine is in good hands."

We were proud too: of the "kitchen-taming" of unusual game *(bayawak, tikling)*. The former was smoked, flavorful and tender, and food-writer Mickey Fenix's favorite among the dishes. The *bangus/mameng* bellies given a sour-sweetness by guava and tamarind were a *nouvelle* reference to *sinigang*, and delighted the Filipino and other Asian guests (e.g. the Japanese ambassador and his wife) -- but was not a favorite with the Europeans and Americans (of whom there were few), since in Western fish culture, bellies (and heads) are discarded, not treasured. My special favorite was the soup, which blended the Chinese wintermelon/sharkfin combo with the Filipino *buko/sabaw* (the Ilonggo *binakol*, the Waray *tinolang buko*) blend. That soup stock married Chinese savvy to Pinoy custom. We all applauded the delicate crayfish flan and crabmeat quenelles -- local seafood treated with respect and imagination. And we thought that the terrine of dried fruits -- healthy and exotic, containing nangka, mango, *champuy*, etc. etc. -- should go down in culinary history.

What *haute cuisine* requires, I now conclude, are not only suppliers, markets, and the *will* to serve in restaurants, and with elegance, what used to be considered only *lutong bahay*, but also and especially creative chefs, bringing to bear their experience in all other cuisines, willing to experiment, improvise, rhapsodize, and be creative with our foods, our traditions, our *lutong bahay* and *lutong fiesta*. That is how all cuisines begin. In other countries these cuisines were brought to their heights in palaces -- for kings and emperors demanding feasts of royal class. In the Philippines, where

there has not been royalty, and even leaders (datus, etc.) were members of the community, Filipino *haute cuisine* is being created by members of the cooking community -- old and young, male and female, homegrown or foreign-trained. The young chefs of Alta Cocina Filipina (Henry Canoy, Ramon Castillo, Marilee Estampador, Gene Gonzalez, Mary Rose Garcia, Bambina Herbosa, Bobby Horrigan, Frank Lacson, Gabriel and Raphael Lim Soon, Louie Llamado, Cesar Onrubia, Joey Pratts, Ed Quimson, Gilda Sandique, Rainee Santos, Noel Silverio -- not all of whom were in the kitchen that night) are helping this happen. And so are other chefs and cooks in other kitchens; and so will many others, since a cuisine evolves slowly, with time and grace.

Philippine *haute cuisine* is here, beginning. It is good, but not yet as good as *alta cocina Filipina* will be in the years to come.

Kinilaw Artistry in Old Sagay

Sagay, Negros Occidental, seemed hours and eons away when I first visited friends there in the 50s. Now it is only two hours away from Bacolod on good roads, and my friends, the Marañons, just as dear and kind. (At the time of writing Freddie was mayor of Sagay; now it is Joseph who is mayor. At that time Sophie, who has since passed away, played hostess more than graciously.)

I wanted to talk to fishermen and ask about *kinilaw*, and proposed to go to Cadiz. That was big-time fishing, with large boats and wholesale buying, I learned. Instead, at six in the morning, Freddie and Sophie took my sister Della and me to Old Sagay. New Sagay has the town center and the business, being close to the national highway; Old Sagay has the fishermen.

Right on the shore Felipe and Warnita Emnasi have their home and their business: three boats, some 2000 meters of fishnet, and large catches that buyers come for. On the sand was evidence of this: piles of wood-framed styrofoam containers, now empty, but filled daily. We wanted to see fishing/selling activity, but there was none, because the day before had been All Souls' Day, and fishermen do not set out to sea on what is called *kalag-kalag* (kalag meaning soul).

Felipe had spent eighteen years working in a rural bank, and then decided to set out on his own. Warnita works alongside him, and makes kinilaw -- soured not only with vinegar, but sometimes with Indian mango; flavored not only with ginger, onions and chili, but sometimes with salted eggs and mayonnaise.

We moved next to the Marañon prawn ponds, as Freddie explained his passion and project: marine conservation, which includes not only battling with, but especially educating those who

use dynamite or in other ways damage the ecology. He had sent some of these to a seminar, and they returned to give echo seminars and to lead their comrades in being vigilantes for the environment. His wife Marilyn, a physician, has her own projects for the Sagaynon, including pooling cooking talents to handle large catering jobs, rather than hiring out-of-town caterers.

We boarded Sophie and Mayo's radio-equipped pumpboat — large, clean, white-painted, with Berto at the controls, Lorenzo as adjutant, and Inteng as chef. Off we went into the calm, seemingly endless sea, on whose surface occasionally skittered a merry fish, or beneath whose waves our companions would point out the bulk of a large game fish. We were unusually favored, Sophie felt, by the weather, since at this time of the year squalls and rough waves are usual.

Because there had been no fish at the Old Sagay *baybay*, we stopped (it seemed miraculous, how we dropped by, stopped, "parked" in sea lanes invisible to us landlubbers) at a tiny fishing village called Suyak. There we found fishermen who had just returned with catches, having set out in the wee hours that morning. A hundred and fifty pesos worth of crabs and fish was enough to feed us six thrice over.

Inteng immediately started preparations in the small triangular space at the stern of the boat. Vicente Lacson Lobaton, once a fisherman, now the owner of a small *manukan* in New Sagay, is a kinilaw artist *non-pareil*, as well as a careful and intelligent craftsman, who knows exactly what he is doing and why.

"For every fish there is a different kinilaw," he declared. The squid he'd chosen, six-seven inches in length, was just the right size for kinilaw (larger = tougher). This he washed first in sea water (that far out, the water is clean and clear, without a hint of pollution), slit on one side to remove spines, eyes, ink and innards, then sliced in even strips, and tossed into a basin of salted water -- the first step of flavoring.

The large live crabs strolling about his feet, he sorted. The liveliest were for kinilaw; the rest went into a well-worn *palayok*, to be steamed over wood (split right on the boat) and coals. The *bulao (alumahan)* Inteng scaled and cleaned, and filleted off the backbone. Heads and *bihud* were set aside for *tinola*; the flesh was sliced skin on, since the skin is soft.

Why, I asked in wonder, are different sea creatures made into different kinds of kinilaw? Squid, he explained, toughens when marinated in vinegar, and so it is only dipped. Some fish, like *bangus* and *tanguingue* "cook" too fast in pure vinegar (or too strong vinegar), and so salted eggs can be crushed into the vinegar to temper the sourness, or sugar can be added. *Gata*, which absorbs some sourness too, can be added to bangus or tanguingue, both firm-fleshed. (Soft flesh becomes *malata* with gata.) Vinegar that is too mild can be made more tart by the addition of *paho*, or of green *sineguelas*. Live fish do not even need vinegar, and so fishermen on the sea strip them off the bone, dip them in the sea for salting, and savor the translucent sweetness of sea-fresh flesh.

And so for breakfast on that lovely morning we had bulan which Inteng first mixed with chopped ginger and sliced spring onions, and then finally, briefly with vinegar (so as not to allow the translucent flesh to become "cooked" opaque), with sliced tomatoes laid on top (for another sourness), but not mixed with the vinegar, because this would become slippery.

The peak experience was crab kinilaw: opened, split and still quivering, the gristle removed such that each leg was a stem with a flower of soft white flesh ("like nata de coco!" marvelled Della). This we dipped into a *sawsawan* of vinegar (aged tuba vinegar would be the best) into which Inteng had shaken a few seeds of *siling haba* (which Ilonggos call *paitan*, vs. *katumbal* or *labuyo*, and *pidada* or bell pepper). Absolute heaven. How do other mortals fare, never having known this?

The rest of the fish went into a tinola with tomatoes and *batuan*. Fish with more *langsa*, Inteng said, can take calamansi (e.g. lapu-lapu); fish not from the rocks but just on the surface of the water only need tomatoes.

All this was done with an economy of motion and a wordless wisdom: organic matter was thrown into the sea; man-made waste (e.g. plastic) into a bag. For although convenient, plastics and paper don't jive with the natural environment. And kinilaw, of course is fruit of pristine nature, healthy because of it. It came about because the sea-going Filipino knew the value of freshness, and of food being left to taste as it was meant to, untampered. An ethos of freshness, a kinship with the environment, has led to one of the best and truest foods of our culture.

She Cuts Pastillas Wrappers

In Bulacan -- especially in San Miguel de Mayumo, the town of sweets and sweetness -- the centerpiece of a fiesta table is always a three-tiered epergne filled with *pastillas de leche*, all of them wrapped in *papel de japon* of different colors, cut out in designs of flowers, leaves, birds, butterflies, and words like "Recuerdo," "Ala-ala," "Fiesta," and the names of the hosts. These lacey tails float down from the dish, wave gently in the breeze, or in the wake of the ceiling fan, proclaiming both sweetness and beauty.

When it is time for dessert, one presumably picks one, tears off the wrapper, and eats the sugar-coated morsel of sweetness within -- and perhaps throws the wrapper away.

Lydia Veneracion, owner of Bulacan Sweets (which has a wide array of sweets from San Miguel and other towns in Bulacan and Pampanga), and Clarita Pangilinan Manrique, both from San Miguel, say, however, that guests do not usually throw the wrapper away; they tuck the candy, wrapper and all, in their pockets. One wonders: do they take them home -- then eat the pastillas and throw the wrapper away, or do they keep the wrappers under glass, or in plastic, or somewhere visible until time takes its toll?

The *pastillas* wrappers of San Miguel, Bulacan, are an example of ephemeral, evanescent art, not meant to last, but to be enjoyed for the short moments of its existence. They are created by a folk mind that thinks: Why offer the fiesta pastillas in a plain white wrapper, the way they are packaged in boxes? Why not cover them in color, in ornamentation, in beauty? Why not enjoy that fleeting moment at a fiesta, within the gaiety, but before the actual savoring of the sweet? Why not make one moment beautiful? Isn't it worth the trouble?

Clarita Manrique cuts pastillas wrappers daily -- some for friends and family, some for private orders, but most of them for Lydia Veneracion's shop, in which they line *escaparate* shelves, or are encased in plastic and sold as souvenirs, or used to decorate gift baskets -- and of course to wrap pastillas with. She is now 76, and learned how to cut when she was 10 -- because all girls her age were cutting. "It was a fad," she says -- and whatever they made joined the hundreds needed for the next fiesta.

Here's how it is done. One takes colored tissue paper (*papel de Japon* used to cost one or two centavos a sheet; now it is up to P1.25 per). Cut a sheet in half, then into fourths. Fold a fourth sheet once, twice, thrice, till you get a strip. Into this strip insert the design already traced on a piece of stiffer paper. Mrs. Manrique explains that she draws the design in pencil on this pattern -- designs remembered from before, or adapted from Indonesia or Japan, or suggested to her by her son who is an artist. She remembers a "Tio Ruben" who used to cut the patterns freehand, but does not think anyone does it that way anymore.

She traces the design out in pencil, then takes embroidery scissors with a curved tip and begins by cutting out the "centers" of the design -- the hearts of flowers, the figures of birds and butterflies, etc. She then cuts out the rest of the pattern, with the "outsides" last. It takes her about 15-20 minutes. She cuts about 20 to 40 of these (the folding allows her to make 4, 6 or 8 at a time) ordinary ones a day. Large ones, such as strips to line shelves, or, on one occasion, to make into hangings for a hotel display, take longer to do. For one of these she made cut-outs of *logos*, including that of San Miguel Corporation.

The designs are mostly traditional ones, although words can be cut out for particular occasions: birthdays, Christmas, Valentine's day. She has even cut out a picture and a name, also Ifugao figures and houses, Moro vintas and *sari-manok*.

Clarita Manrique is a trained nurse who worked in Malacañang in the time of President Quezon. She retired in 1981, and now, at the age of 76, occupies herself with this craft that she learned as a girl, along with her cousins in Bulacan. She speculates that the craft may have come to their town from the Chinese, since she has heard of the Chinese paper-cuts which, however, are never used to wrap candy. They are kept in folded tissue paper, and when very large are framed under glass. I have been to an institute of

folk craft in Shanghai, where a smiling old man, a national treasure, makes paper-cuts free-hand, and teaches his art to younger people. Mrs. Manrique is happy keeping busy (she also reads novels by Barbara Cartland and other romance writers), and teaching her 10-year-old grand-daughter, Diana, to cut *pastillas* wrappers. Diana told us that she works only on the "spoiled pieces" her Lola sets aside -- when the scissors slip, say, or her attention was called elsewhere.

In these days when handicraft is not always done by hand; when a manufacturer concerned with speed and volume could locate a machine that will stamp out hundreds of pastillas-wrapper designs at a time -- probably in plastic; when it would seem tedious and labor-intensive to trace patterns and hand-cut 4, 6 or 8 wrappers at a time, in a thin paper that will be torn a minute after unwrapping, one blesses Mrs. Manrique. Thank God that there is someone who not only remembers the designs, the tradition, the "fad" of old, but is happy cutting them out day after day, and teaching the art to her grandchild.

Thank heaven that the art has not died, and that in our day we still need not get our pastillas in "plain wrapper," but, if we wish, enclosed in this ephemeral beauty that speaks of what the Filipino feels about fiestas, sweets, and beauty.

The Sweet Taste of Success

There once was a little girl who sold bread in the streets before school. She lived in fear of getting to school late (although her mother had asked the teachers not to punish her children for lateness caused by earning the family's livelihood), and of coming home with food unsold, because her mother had said she must never bring the food back. Never, of course, did she think of playing hookey, and she would wander off her routes when sales were slow, even bartering the bread for fish or bananas.

By the time she was a teenager, she was in kitchens, employed to do the work of an adult. Once she was laid off for being underage, but always she found work because she was industrious, quick, and eager to learn. Her real break came with employment at the Seabreeze Hotel, where the owner, Angelina Puentevella Echauz, taught her, treated her well, gave her good advice, and introduced her to friends.

One day she cooked for Lyn Salas Abello, who had a guest, who in turn invited her to her kitchen to cook. It was like a good luck chain because each patron introduced her to others, and whispered to her to charge a little more -- with good reason, because she used to charge P5 for cooking a full meal.

Eventually, by the time she was charging P50 a meal, she had so many clients that even a cake had to be orderd a week ahead. Remedios Sugon had acquired a name and a reputation. The next step, of course, was to open a restaurant called Reming's.

Today in Bacolod, there are four restaurants called Reming's & Sons: the main outlet on Lizares Avenue; one near her old workplace the Seabreeze Hotel, fronting the plaza, a few steps from the Bishop's residence; and two at the Iris Commercial Com-

plex. All serve cooked food, *turo-turo*/cafeteria style, and are very popular.

If what we had on a Sunday noon was a fair sample, Reming serves some of the best food in Bacolod. Admittedly, the food had been ordered ahead by Lyn B. Gamboa, my sister-in-law, who had been one of Reming's early patrons. However, all she requested was *paklay*, my late father's favorite dish, which one can never find in restaurants, and which only friends and their cooks seem to prepare -- when I plead for it. Reming said she would add it to her Sunday lunch menu, along with a few other dishes she wanted us to try.

Paklay she made of goat innards (others use beef liver, intestines, etc., because they are easier to get) cooked in ginger, soured and flavored with pineapple, *balimbing*, and kamias, creating textural contrasts and complements -- salty and sour, chewy and soft. She also served guapple *lumpia*, flavored with ground peanuts and peanut butter. And a chicken-guapple-mayonnaise salad. The soup was a thickly savory *binacol*, beautifully served in a young coconut so cleverly cut that it had a "cap" as cover, and tender chicken portions in counterpoint with soft slices of *buko*. The vegetable course was something I'd never tasted, which she called *linotik* — a mash of squash in coconut milk, accented by shrimps and a touch of *guinamtus* -- traditionally eaten, she told us, with *paksiw na bangus*. There were crunchy guapple-chili pickles, and guapple tarts for dessert. The guapple dominance was due to the fact that it is a flourishing Negros crop of recent vintage, and therefore fair game for invention.

Even more delicious was Reming's story, told humbly in response to our questions. She learned cooking from her mother, Concepcion Paredes, a strong and straight-backed septagenarian, who had become an excellent cook, working in the households of the rich. Nanay spoke of the survival foods she learned to prepare during World War II, including a pancit-like dish made from the skin of *kamoteng kahoy*.

Reming, trained in ways of economy and hard work, now has many subsidiary enterprises that support her restaurant operations. She makes her own sausages -- *chorizo de recado*, *hamonado*, and *Macao*. Also her own soy sauce, vinegar, breads, and pickles. She has invented a Tamarind Sauce that goes well with fish and meats -- thick and brown like a steak sauce, but with a *sampaloc* tang.

Writer Modesto Saonoy took it with him to Australia, showed it to food merchandisers, and returned with an order for 1000 cases a month.

Her husband runs the fishing boats and the piggery that supply her kitchens. Her children not only help (each restaurant is assigned to one of them) but are developing into cooks. Daughter Concepcion won the Grand Prize, and son John the second in different Magnolia National Cooking Contests, their entries being her Peach Buko Mallow and Pinipig Crunch Torte. Reming herself has only won on the regional level.

Reming also preserves fruits -- *kamias* becomes Kamias Prunes, which she makes soft for children's snacks, and hard for storing (for as long as five years) and then stewing for prune cakes. In pomelo season, she buys up the skins and glazes them for future fruitcakes. Assorted local fruits go into her fresh fruit cocktail. Coconut water becomes *nata de coco* or vinegar. And then of course she bakes her own desserts, and such sweetbits as Bacolod Bars (a take-off on Food for the Gods) and Peanut Cakes.

Her catering business has grown beyond cooking-in-others' kitchens to one of the biggest in the city, servicing weddings, the Rotary Club, funerals, schools, conferences. Reming's house started at room-size and is now a four-level structure, with provisions for her catering needs -- a long sink for all the dishwashing and laundering; a roomful of ironing boards; connecting storage shelves and bins for all the table ware, platters, tablecloths, etc. Reming tells how, when she was cooking for private families, she would buy a platter or a pot with each bit of profit. Now she has roomfuls of them, representing years of hard work, small profits, careful buying, and steady progress.

Proudly, she points to a structure going up beside her home a three or four-storey building that will house her main kitchen, another restaurant, a hall for wedding and other receptions, and offices. It is going up slowly, because building goes apace with the availability of cash. Her husband, typical "tabukanon," she says -- from Iloilo, therefore conservative -- does not want to take out loans. And her mother echoes the rationale: "What if they ask you for the money back, and you don't have it right then?"

Yet opportunities have not been absent. Reming has joined government seminars, trade organizations like the Hotel and Restaurant Association Negros Branch, the Negros Occidental Food

Provincial Association, etc. She has been sent on observation tours in the country and abroad. From each seminar or workshop or trip she learned some new product, technique or recipes (vinegar, nata de coco, food preservation), that she promptly added to her enterprises. She was written about in the Food Industry Magazine, and offered loans by the DBP and private banks. But although Lyn explained to her the uses of credit, the cost of money, etc., she answered: "My husband wants it that way."

Now that she is so successful, Reming is going to school, and has proudly made it to third year high school. "I sit in the back," she says, behind her young classmates, and she laughs, "I am too fat for the desk." She can manage all her courses, but finds math hard. Knowing that her pronunciation of English words needs much improvement, she has a tape that she plays at home and repeats words to. And when she finishes high school? Home Economics, she answers promptly -- although we suggested nutrition or food technology. After all, who can teach Reming anything about cooking and home economics?

She actually has a cooking school as well -- summers, because she finds it a pity that children are often left idle. Sometimes she has 150 students in different classes. Many of them, she finds, become not only friends but customers. Because of this she has a cookbook too, an unselfish sharing of many of her own recipes, and those she learned at various seminars and in her constant efforts to expand her knowledge.

Now that she has the time (and the resources), she also donates to feeding programs for the poor.

The secret of her success is easy to see: a solid base of homespun Christian values. "Indi ka lang magdalok," she says -- don't be greedy about money, secrets, help, salaries, recipes. Her staff of 90 includes many relatives. When her husband had his own job, which soon paid less than her enterprises, she never insisted on his help, and eventually it was volunteered. "Nag-strong kay buligay," we became strong because we helped each other, is how she puts it. She stayed loyal to her *suki* even when others offered better deals, and so they remained loyal to her too, giving her quality goods, trusting her for credit. In business, she exercises an instinctive democracy, quaintly expressed as: "Wala ko gina-class," in reference to restaurants, so that anyone can come to eat and feel comfortable.

When we left Reming after a tour of her house, her laundry and storage, her building-in-construction, word came that her boats had brought in lots of fish in Hinigaran -- big ones for the restaurant, smaller ones to sell. Of course they had to be fetched right away, so up she jumped -- on a Sunday, after cooking us a feast -- to get on her truck (one of four vehicles all acquired second-hand) and pick them up several towns away.'

Her energy was energizing; her humility humbling; the taste of her success sweet and inspiring in these times of trouble and discouragement. The feast we had at Reming's (& Sons) we bore away with us not only in our stomachs, but especially in our hearts. *"Nakababata ng puso," ika nga.* (It makes the heart young, as they say.)

The Filipino Kitchen

When I was growing up in Silay, Negros Occidental, my father built my sister and me a bamboo-and-nipa playhut. It had two rooms (one presumably the living room), a porch and a kitchen. In the latter was a *dapug* -- a rectangular open box -- in which sat two *kalan*, clay stoves using firewood and coal. We had *kulon* or *palayok*, pots of fired red clay, which turned black after use; and small wok-like *karahay*, clay skillets with handles. Although smaller than full-size, all could actually be used, and were authentic, having come from Barrio Guinhalaran, where the claypot craft had been flourishing for so long that the artisans can only say that fathers and grandfathers had been at it since their memories began.

We really used that kitchen. We'd bring in rice, tomatoes, garlic and onions from the "big house," and gather *talinum* (fame flower) and *alugbate* (Ceylon spinach) from the garden nearby. We'd cook rice in the clay pot, measuring the water by sticking in a middle finger and seeing it reach just below the knuckle. The vegetables were sautéed -- and eaten with gusto, even if we normally shunned *utan* (*gulay*; vegetables) in the "real" meals cooked in the big kitchen.

It was fun; it was delicious. Now I know that rice cooked in a palayok is delicious because of the flavor sealed in by the thick clay. And I realize that the vegetables must have tasted good to us not only because we had cooked them, but because they were freshly gathered and simply prepared. Although the magic of make-believe and the enchantment of a child's playworld surely enhanced the flavor of those long-ago meals, I also know now that the wisdom behind the ways of a Filipino kitchen made a definite contribution.

The Filipino kitchen is as simple as the food, and the freshness with which it comes to the kitchen. There is usually a table or shelf or surface on which to put the kalan, and thus lift the cooking flames to a comfortable height. Since there is space left below, this is used for storing firewood and coal, cooking pots, supplies, and whatever else the householder wishes. Rolly Bajo, a Davao friend, once found all the extant plays of Cebuano playwright Emiliano Gabuya beneath a *dapug*. Why they were stored there nobody knows. If one spark had fallen on them, documents of the *sarswela volante* (itinerant plays) and the achievement of Gabuya would have been lost forever.

Then there are the *kalan* -- clay stoves shaped to bear fire in their bellies (kept going by blowing through a bamboo *ihip*), with rims to hold the pots and pans. (The word is used in Bikolano, Kapampangan, Hiligaynon, Ibanag, Subanon, Waray, Ivatan and Tagalog. Synonyms are *kusinilya, abuhan, tungko*, and *dapugan*. In Ibanag, Ilokano, and Pangasian, the word is *dalikan*; also *kalikan*.) Joseph Earle Stevens, a British resident of 19th century Manila, compares the kalan to "an old shoe. The vamp of the shoe represents the heart; the opening in front the place for putting in small sticks of wood; and the enclosing upper, the rim on which rests the single big pot or kettle."

The basic pot is the *palayok* (*koron* in Bikolano and Waray; *kuran* in Kapampangan; *kulon* in Ilongo and Subanon; *banga* in Ibanag, Ilokano, Ivatan and Pangasinan). In Guinhalaran, they are still being made from the local clay and fired in open pits, but the makers admit that demand has decreased, because metal pots (and even rice cookers) have replaced them. In Manila they are popular in restaurants and buffets offering Filipino food (e.g. Kabalen). The palayok belly is larger than its mouth, so that the food is nestled and the flavor concentrated. Old folks say that nothing cooked in metal will ever taste as good as that cooked in earthenware.

For sautéeing, frying, braising, etc., there are the *kawali*, shaped like woks, curve-bottomed, with handles, and the cast iron *talyasi*, medium-sized iron vats for party-sized recipes. For really big fiestas one needs *kawa* (large vats), which are usually used outdoors, over open fires. Before the advent of steamers, steaming used to be done in the same utensils, but with the *ulam* or *puto* or *suman* wrapped in buri or banana leaves, or moulded in white porcelain saucers. Baking, as of *bibingka*, was done by putting heat

on top (as well as below) -- glowing coals on the clay pot or skillet lid. "Average families," writes Felice Sta. Maria, "had one or two *kalans*; kitchens of the rich, up to a dozen. It was common to store an extra *kalan* for fiestas and other special occasions that required more cooking than usual."

Traditional cooks, Gilda Fernando points out in "The Country Cooks," "looked down on one's aluminum casseroles and frying pans, saying they were *malansa* (metallic-tasting), surely having come from some airplane part. Loyally, they stuck to the clay pots and the cast iron *taliyasi* and the native *kawali*, or the old copper utensils of days gone by. *Asado* was better *asado* if done in a genuine *carajay* [thus the name, *Asado de Carajay*] -- the clay kept the heat in and the pores diffused it to a slow burn. Rice was more fragrant if cooked in an earthen pot with banana leaves on the bottom and a *pandan* (screwpine) leaf tucked in just before it cooked. And what could beat the size and the efficiency of the *taliyasi* for an *arroz Valenciana* for 50 people?"

For a fiesta, of course, no indoor kitchen could contain or provide for the hectic, festive, quantity cookery. The yard became the kitchen, where fires and spits were set up for the *lechon*; more fires for the hot water (for cleaning utensils and butchered animals) and the *kawa-kawa* of *adobo, caldereta, dinuguan*, etc. More cooks were not only called, but came on their own: "Like birds," writes Fernando, "they flocked to a house where a celebration was to take place, not to eat, but to help. Some were distant relations, others, relatives of the servants, some, people who had served in the farm. In the province there were more of these auxiliary cooks and helpers, though the city had its own counterparts. They swept the yard and put up an extension of the kitchen under the breadfruit or the tamarind or the jackfruit tree. It was they who did the dirty jobs - washed the pots and pans (first in a tub of sawdust), and then the plates. Earlier they were *tiga tumba ng baka* (in charge of knocking the steer down) if there was a cow to slaughter and cleaned out the intestines of bovine, fowl or fish."

These part-time, special-occasion, volunteer cooks came equipped with their favorite knives, and took on the variety of kitchen tasks that a fiesta demanded. They were happy squatting in the yard washing, chopping, or tending the fires -- labor later to be rewarded with *pabaon* (food to take home). Distrusting electric and gas stoves, "whose heat, they cried in dismay, could never be

controlled," they meticulously controlled the live flames by "taking out a live coal and putting it back, perpetually shifting and rearranging the embers depending on what the dish needed. If the auxiliary cooks smoked cigars or cigarettes, it was always with the lighted end inside the mouth, to prevent the ashes from dribbling into all that good food."

Where is the washing done in the Filipino kitchen? Indoors, at the *banggera*, that area impossible to define in English. It is not a sink, not a room, not a kitchen, not a bathroom, but partakes of all of the above. Washings fall through the bamboo slats to the ground below (the *mumho* or rice grains feed the chickens); there pans and plates hang to drip and dry in the country air. Outdoors, there are the faucets, the tubs/vats of water -- and the river, the brook, the sea. In our research for a recent book, Ed Alegre watched an old man sitting by the sea and making *kinilaw* of shark flesh and liver. The sea in the background, the sand on which he worked, were a perfect analogy for the dish: from sea to land came the food and the technology and the ethos.

What are the implements used? The above knives, coconut shell *sandok* (ladles) of different sizes with bamboo handles, and the turners called *sianse* (a Chinese word betraying its origin), which not only turn, but also sear *(plancha)* -- ham, for example. There used to be as well stone *gilingan* for grinding rice, e.g. for *puto; kabayo* ("horse") for grating coconut (the grater often attached to fancily carved, animal-shaped benches that were fun to "ride"); *almirez* (mortar), often marble, for pounding spices and extracting juice from shrimpheads.

For measuring, there used to be wooden measures (*ganta* and its fractions) and empty tin cans ("isa ka salmon," a salmon-tin-full is still the standard measurement for rice in some Negros barrios), as well as "isa ka pudyut" (a pinch) or "isa ka sandok" (a ladleful). Anyway, measurements were not that important, since native cooks improvise, are flexible, measure by instinct. In Pura Villanueva Kalaw's cookbook *Condimentos Indigenas* (1918), some measurements are quite exact (*20 hojas de dagmay o de gabe; 10 pimientos filipinos silvestres; 1 centavo de miso* -- 20 taro leaves; 10 wild pimientos; 1 centavo worth of soy bean mash), and some are left to common sense and experience (*3 pescados de regular tamaño; poquitin de manteca; 1 cucharadita de mantequilla si la hay* -- 3 regular-sized fish; a little lard; a small spoonful of butter if available). For

special dishes there were special implements and utensils: *llaneras* for *leche flan, chocolateras* and *batidors* for chocolate; copper *tachos* for *pastillas de leche* and other confections such as fruits in syrup; *garapiñeras* for making ice cream. Water was kept cool in earthenware *banga*. What else could one ask for? Life was simple, yet complete with fiestas.

With American colonization came the educational system, "domestic science" courses, and determined efforts to modernize cooking methods and ways -- and the Filipino kitchen. "It was with Major General Arthur MacArthur, who marched into the Islands with his U.S. Volunteers, that the Filipinos got their first glimpse of the American kitchen," writes Sta. Maria in "The Turn-of-the-Century Kitchen." "There were field cooking ranges -- Myers and Buzzacot -- Blodgett pipe ovens and bread ovens, and myriad garbage cans. The resident Quartermaster himself manufactured the water cans for distilled water, the stove furniture, can openers, ice boxes, baking and biscuit pans, meat blocks and kitchen sinks."

A change of technology, custom, and lifestyle was called for -- in the cause of modernization. Scholar-teachers sent to the Philippine Normal School were required to take courses in domestic science (cooking, sewing). The cooking curriculum included: The uses and English names of kitchen equipment; dishwashing; sweeping and dusting; kitchen linen; soap making; measuring; water (for cleansing, for drinking); care of kitchen utensils (stoves, cooking vessels, dishes, cups, spoons, knives and forks, garbage pails); classification of foods (proteins, carbohydrates, fats, minerals); the purposes of foods in the body; ways of cooking food (boiling, stewing, baking, roasting, broiling, frying, sautéeing, pan-broiling, pan-baking, fricasseeing); cooking lessons (including cakes, candies, stews, sandwiches, etc.); personal hygiene; care of the sick; care of children; menu-making; food values in relation to cost; house management. Teachers were later fielded throughout the country to teach the new domestic science, equipped with native stoves, American stoves, oil stoves, alcohol stoves, Dutch ovens, etc.

Naturally, the Filipino kitchen changed. "We find the Filipino kitchen," wrote Hugo Miller in *The Philippine Craftsman* (January 1914) "not sufficiently planned for in the mind of the house builders, that it is cramped and ill-equipped and impossible to keep clean. Using the same materials found in the houses of the middle classes generally -- wood, sawali, and nipa -- we have a model

house constructed . . . In this kitchen we do not have a great number of utensils . . . But we have what is essential for good housekeeping. . . . The Filipino stove question, as to dirt, smoke, and the like, we have solved by having shelves for them built out from the kitchen windows. The discomfort from the heat is also greatly reduced. Having disposed of the question of stoves by adopting the Filipino stove and introducing the Dutch oven and fireless cooker, the matter of what to cook follows naturally."

Although the clay *kalan* remained in many homes, it acquired variations. One modification had a clay top with holes for three pots. The Maria Orosa *pugon-palayok* (stove-pot) is fitted inside with a metal disc and a grill raised 1-1/2 inches, its lid lined with metal as well, so that the pot can function as an oven. *The Philippine Craftsman* (December 1915) has a picture of a Japanese charcoal-burning stove, and a copy of it made in "a barrio of Silay". This is a "pot-within-a-pot arrangement; the inner pot holds the charcoal and the outer one gives shape to the stove itself and supports the vessel placed on it." Beside it is shown a Dutch oven made of galvanized iron, which cost P2.60, including P1 for labor.

In short, Americanization of the Filipino kitchen began then, continued, and continues. Soon Red Star and Hot Point ranges were available on Echague and Rosario. *Ladies' Home Journal* and *Good Housekeeping*, and much later *Better Homes and Gardens* and *House Beautiful*, showed the elite the kitchens to desire, if they were to be up to date. Ice became available, and later refrigeration, and much later freezers -- changing the habits of securing fresh fish and vegetables only for the day. Backyard gardens were encouraged, and the preservation of food (canning, bottling, curing, pickling) was taught. Courses in Home Economics and Home Making were introduced in schools, and became popular choices for the Filipina. Cookbooks, magazines, and movies promoted American food culture and the American way of life. "Scientific" and "sanitary" became the catchwords of the day. Nutrition was a high concern, hygiene a driving rule. The American kitchen was of course the model and the dream.

The result today is the modern kitchen planned by the housewife and often by the interior designer, who talks of work triangles (refrigerator, sink, and stove) and efficiency patterns. It draws on all the modern technology: gas and electric stoves, microwave ovens, exhaust hoods, blenders, beaters, slicers, food processors, candy and roasting thermometers, broilers and grills built into stoves, and all manner of cooking, washing and measuring implements.

Does Filipino food fit into this high-tech marvel? Yes it does, because the modern methods maximize the housewife's/cook's time, adapt well to all the basic processes of our native cuisine, which are indeed no different from those of other cultures. Proof that adjustment is still going on, however, is the fact that many urban and modern homes still have "dirty kitchens" alongside the modern ones. Here firewood and coal may still be used (especially in these days of high prices and power failures). Here native cooks still reign, preferring their *karahay* and *taliyasi* to teflon pans and electric skillets, their "tantya-tantyorum" measuring to scales and measures. Here, housewives say, the splash and dash of native cooking is kept away from their gleaming appliances.

The Filipino kitchen reflects our food and our culture. Its firewood-clay stove technology spoke of simple fresh foods needing simple methods; its current high-tech speaks of modern living. Its location in flexible space (not necessarily a separate room, quite often outdoors in yard, field, forest, or boat) reflects the Filipino's attitude to house-backyard-street-community as flexible, communal space without strict divisions. Today this kitchen is visible in all its phases, in the whole range of its evolution. In the homes of peasants and fishermen and the *masa*, we still find dapog, kalan, and palayok. At fiestas in the provinces, kitchens still appear in backyards and fields, and *pakikisama* (fellow-feeling) rules the gathering of talent and manpower. In middleclass and urban homes, American-style (and Italian, Danish, Chinese, etc. as desired) kitchens are visible -- sometimes alongside humble "dirty kitchens."

Our kitchens speak of the way we are -- keeping strong roots in the tradition, yet adjusting to the needs of modern living.

Restaurants of Yesteryears

My yesteryears stretch only to the 50s, when I moved to Manila for schooling, and so I cannot speak of such venerable old places as Tom's Dixie Kitchen and the Restaurant de Paris. Harking back to the 50s, however, does mean traversing a span of some 40 years, long enough to harvest some history and much nostalgia.

I was an *interna* in a convent school, and so my parents' visits to Manila were much awaited. My sister and I could then change from starched white Sunday dresses to colored "outside dresses" and go out to eat. My lola usually took us to movies at the Scala moviehouse (which always showed double programs), with snacks of *ampaw* afterwards, but my father's restaurant treats were a rare glimpse for *colegialas*, not only of sophistication, but of food not found at home or at school.

The Selecta on Azcarraga (now C.M. Recto Avenue) was favored, because it had tenderloin steak served sizzling on the first hot platters of our limited experience. So this was American food! we *provincianas* learned. Eventually, when we were in college and going out on dates (usually group), we also frequented the Roxas Boulevard Selecta -- spanking new then, and a favorite for parties after piano recitals or graduation, or for eighteenth birthdays. This was "after-hours" -- after a movie or play, not really very late, when the thing to have was *tapa* and *sinangag* (not yet called *tapsi*), and certainly the famous Selecta ice-cream -- *mantecado, macapuno,* ube -- tasting of really fresh milk, nothing powdered or canned.

At about the same cost level was the Bulakeña, where the sultry Carmen Soriano was said to be singing (schoolgirls didn't usually go to nightclubs), and where the thing to order was *cascaron*, skewered meat and fish balls with a sweet peanut sauce.

All the college kids felt especially at home, however, at the Aristocrat, where we went after jam sessions and proms, on Saturday or Sunday afternoons after movies, or whenever we had the money. What did we order? *tapa* or *longganisa* and *sinangag*. Perhaps Pancit Canton or Chicken Honey. But more often, flying saucer sandwiches (adobo, ham salad) and the special sandwich creations like Cliff House, Kissing Rock and Suzy Wong (breaded and deep-fried) -- such extravagant period names. These are gone now -- perhaps because they are too caloric or too expensive, certainly because of too much competition from hamburgers and pizzas.

We also liked the Brown Derby for footlong hot dogs, and very especially Botica Boie on the Escolta, which resembled the soda fountains one read about in the comics (remember Patsy Walker?). There we learned about parfaits, sundaes, sodas, and shakes, and felt terribly sophisticated (read: American) sitting on stools at the counter and watching the "soda jerks" -- a new name, a new profession -- do their thing.

Melico on Isaac Peral (U.N. Avenue), however, was the smaller, friendlier, soda place -- just a small counter and a few tables -- which had the thickest, loveliest milkshakes in Manila in those innocent times. I can name a few well-known couples whose romances sweetened over Melico milkshakes.

When we became upperclassmen, and later "working girls" or young marrieds, the scene changed. One of the best places to go to was the Swiss Inn on Roxas Boulevard. I remember my first order ever -- Lamb Chops Mousquetaire (with toasted garlic) -- and how suave and grown-up my classmate Rosemary Mallillin and I felt, because we were eating out on our own, without parents or dates. Remember the wooden panels with grape cravings, the green-shaded hanging lamps, the pinewood chairs? And the specialties like Pig Knuckle with sauerkraut and boiled potatoes, the Fresh Corned Beef, the sausages (Bratwurst, Schublig) which only they had? And especially the Fondue Bourguignonne, served with a selection of sauces -- mayonnaise, horse radish, thousand island dressing, curry sauce, sate sauce, and chili sauce? Years later, in Zurich, I wondered why Fondue came with only one or two sauces, and not with the prodigality of the Old Swiss Inn. Only now do I realize what indigenization -- read: Filipinization -- does to adopted/adapted cuisines.

My father also took us to a small, one-bay restaurant on Isaac Peral. Its owner-cook was a former pelotari named Anastacio de Alba, who would talk to each group, and himself prepare the orders. Papa's was always Solomillo a la Pobre, a juicy filet sprinkled with crisp-fried garlic. Alba's grew fast, and soon moved around the corner to Florida Street, where in the 60s it was still the place to have Chicken a la Kiev (slice carefully, or the butter spurts), Pollo a la Reina Regencia, and of course *callos, bacalao* and *paella.*

In those interna days, one classmate, Adelita, would come back on Monday mornings sleepy and dreamy-eyed, telling of evenings at a place -- practically a hut -- on the beach, drinking *sangria*, listening to guitar music, and singing Spanish songs while waiting for the sunrise. Divine decadence, we thought in envy, longing for such adventure and daring to enter our convent school lives. The place was owned by another pelotari, Marcos de Guisasola, and eventually came to be Casa Marcos, another home for the *tapas* -- *gambas al ajillo, almejas, calamares, salpicado* -- now seemingly indispensable to our eating or drinking out.

Cafe Indonesia was, for a whole generation, haunt and home. The food was Pinoy-adapted Indonesian, creation of Pete Alfonso (father of the singer Sampaguita). There we discovered *sate* of chicken, beef, liver and pork with a thick, dark sweetish peanut sauce -- and *sajur lodeh* and *gado-gado*. An order of sate (5 sticks) came with *nasi goreng*, and half orders (2 sticks) were possible in impoverished times.

Toots Dila, trumpeteer, and his band played "progressive" jazz, and any jazzbos in town -- Bestre Roxas the trumpet-player, Ading Dila the alto sax man, Tony Velarde, Asia's best drummer, the pianists Piding Alava and Emil Mijares, the Katindig brothers (Eddie K was just starting, and playing congas), the singers Annie Brazil, Diana Cruz, Dulce Din -- usually finished off the night by jamming with Toots' band and whoever else was around. So did musicians from the ships, from the shows, from the bases, and from the amateur ranks. Nickie Escario, now a respected neurosurgeon in Cebu, improvised on the piano night after night, and we wondered when he had time for medical studies. Louie Jalandoni, who became mayor of Magalona (formerly Saravia), his Negros hometown, was at the bongos, and my brother Nil Gamboa earned his conga credentials by literally bleeding (his hands) for them. Tony

Joaquin would sing "I've Got You Under My Skin," and Nelda Navarro the songs of June Christie.

The jazz fans who hung out at Cafe Indonesia were a loose, shifting, gang of friends, who usually checked in at the Cafe before or after going to other restaurants, bars, or nightclubs. They dated, they fell in love, they sent flowers through Mila, the flower vendor (who sent siblings through school that way), sometimes they married. It was there that I met my husband Wili, and all the jazz musicians whom we later would encounter all over Asia. When they saw Wili in Hong Kong or Bangkok, they would say a "musical hello" by playing a bar or two of Dave Brubeck's "Audrey" ("Balcony Rock") or of Duke Ellington's "Sophisticated Lady" for him. The camaraderie among such diverse people came from having shared the sate, the jazz, the late nights, and the very air of Cafe Indonesia.

A favorite haunt some years later was the Cucina Italiana on Padre Faura. Here one always saw friends (like Anding Roces) in one of the two rooms, usually having the same things: our favorite Cotolette di Cervello (calf brains batter-dipped and fried golden and crusty), Scaloppine alla Romana (ham and veal), a very plain tenderloin steak fried in butter, and some simple pastas (tomato or meat sauce; *agli olio* or butter and cheese). The larger room was made up to suggest the Blue Grotto -- papier mâché snaking up walls and ceiling, studded with Christmas lights, giant vermouth and Chianti bottles, starfish, plaster seahorses and shells. No great shakes, but Signor Lammoglia was a genuinely warm *patron*, who sat at his table, greeted the regulars, sometimes sent over a dish he was trying out (fried squash flowers, he once sent me), and made it feel like one's own neighborhood trattoria.

Our education in American food was acquired at Ms. Hazel Hedrick's Taza de Oro, with its classic Hot Roast Beef Sandwich, Chili con Carne, Hamburger "Size" (with chili and raw onions), Lady Baltimore Cake and Banana Cream Pie. These were great after theater, when one would see Bobby Perez (now Dom Bernardo, OBS), then music-theater critic of *The Manila Times*, sprinkling condiments randomly over his chicken curry, making sure each mouthful was a different delight.

Peak experience for us then, however, was dining at the New Europe. When Heinz Woelke was around and not too busy, he sat and chatted about the famous and infamous people he knew and had served -- first as chief steward on the ship Mayon, then as the

city's top restaurateur of the era. The wonderfully courteous waiters he trained later emerged as the first homegrown headwaiters and *maitres d'*, and all came to captain other restaurants: Alex Guyon, who specialized in the tableside cooking; Johnny Castillo, who always knew your drink and your favorite food through the years; Pablo who later bossed the Meralco executive dining room. When they welcomed you to your favorite table, you felt not only at home but special.

This was where many first tried Steak Tartare, expertly mixed with lemons, onions, capers, etc. Cold potato Vichysoisse was not available anywhere else; neither was Königsberger Klops, veal balls in white sauce with capers. This was when I had my first Rum Omelet, ethereally light and "branded" for a burnt-sugar taste. Baked Alaska, Cherries Jubilee and Crepes Suzette were not easily found in other places, and certainly not with the excellence and ease of the New Europe.

There were not too many restaurants in those yesteryears, yet amazingly the range of food now was substantially available then, expanding homegrown repertoires, educating diners, breeding gastronomes. For Chinese food one went to the Sta. Cruz area — to the Panciterias Antigua and Moderna, Wa Nam and San Jacinto. For *chocolate y churros* there was La Cibeles. Halo-halo was good at Little Quiapo and, we heard, at the Central Market. Filipino food was at Aristocrat, Bulakeña and Selecta -- and the more risky ("There might be trouble-makers!") Ambos Mundos, and of course at the markets and *carinderias* to which colegialas and their dates never went. The Manila Hotel's Bamboo Room, which dared serve *adobo* and *sinigang* in a somewhat elegant setting, was startlingly innovative. Max's fried chicken was even then a favorite with families and college kids. Those passionate about seafood drove to Fish Fun in Malabon for oysters. Madrid and Au Bon Vivant, Costa Brava and The Only Place, Sing Ya and Willow Court, and of course the hotel dining rooms and coffee shops were still in the undreamed-of future.

My yesteryears -- the 50s into the early 60s -- saw the beginnings of our restaurant history (the "origs" that sprouted branches and chains), the setting of our eating and drinking patterns (Spanish, Filipino, Chinese, continental, American), the education of our palates. In those untroubled times, food and drink were affordable even without credit cards. Entertainment was simple -- a singer

and a pianist or small band, big bands being for nightclubs, where one danced the "slow drag," the boogie, the cha-cha. One either went for Sinatra and "All the Things You Are," or Brubeck and "Lullaby of Birdland." The city after dark was undisturbed and safe; nights were moonlit and innocent.

Yesterday, indeed, "all our troubles seemed so far away"!

The Regional Food Adventure

My first venture into a Maranao market in Marawi City, Lanao del Sur, showed me shapes and colors new to me: *dalag* bright yellow with turmeric; long cylindrical sticky cakes called *dudol*; lacey pancakes being fried at streetside. On a Jaro market-day, on the other hand, a smiling old woman offered us *"ploresen"* (fluorescent), gleaming white tubes of *ubad*, the core of the banana plant. That was familiar to me, an Ilongga, because we shred and cook them with chicken -- although Tagalogs do not.

Obviously, even though the dishes known as "Filipino" to most -- *lechon* and *lumpia; pinakbet* and *pospas; adobo* and *asado* -- are indeed found around the islands, there are regional differences brought about by the terrain, the climate maybe, and what Eddy Alegre calls "the arbitrariness of food choices." Custom and culture decree that different people eat different things, and that makes for variety and adventure.

The Ilocano flavor principle, for example, leans towards the bitter: *ampalaya* (bittermelon), which is indispensable to *pakbet;* and especially goat's bile, which makes *pinapaitan.* Ilocanos know that after the mildly bitter comes the pleasure of an after-sweetness, and that the word "bittersweet" is a reality, not a figure of speech.

Bicolanos, we know, cook *sili* into many dishes. The mild *siling haba* and the tiny fierce *siling labuyo* grow everywhere in the islands, but only the Bicolanos cook them with pork (Bicol Express), with vegetables (in *laing* and *santol*, both with coconut milk), with fish and chicken and beef. How did they come to this high register of chili-hotness? I have often wondered. The weather, explained one: chilis make one perspire, and cool the body in the humid Bicol weather. But then many other regions are equally humid at certain

times of the year. Poverty, said another: a little *sili* makes rice go a long way. But then poverty is not found only in one place; it is the core problem of developing countries.

The taste for hotness is also found among the Maranaws, who pound *sili* together with garlic, ginger and wild onions into *palapa,* a relish used to give spark and life to almost any fish or vegetable dish.

It is not found among Ilonggos, however, who lean toward the mild, like chicken *binacol,* cooked in a coconut shell or a bamboo tube with *buko;* or *paklay,* in which goat, pork or beef variety meats are gently soured with green pineapple and *balimbing* fruit.

Tagalogs like sourness to a precise degree: *"katamtaman,"* they say, to describe the point of perfection for *sinigang* soured with tamarind fruits, or leaves and flowers, or *kamias,* or green mango, or *alibangbang* leaves. The Cebuanos like sourness too, but their *tinola (tinowa)* is fish eased to mild sourness only with tomatoes, and therefore suitable for an early-morning breakfast.

The taste for coconuts is almost universal in the country (and in the Pacific rim), but while the Bicolanos squeeze it into coconut cream and milk to mix in *ulam,* the people of Laguna and Quezon often use the young flesh: as noodles *(pansit buko),* to steam with river shrimp *(pinais),* and in the *buko* pies that developed during the American regime.

All these regional variations reflect a people scattered among more than 7000 islands, a few large and many small, with the longest discontinuous coastline in the world (approximately 17,462 km.), with hills and mountains, rivers and streams, brooks and bays and a lot of sea; as well as fields and forests, swamps and valleys. Although a common racial stock and a shared history (especially Spanish and American colonization, and the painful growth into democracy) gave these peoples real commonalities, their terrains and ethnic characteristics gave them as well certain differences.

Thus regional food too, has similarities and differences. The soured broth -- *tinola* in Cebu, *sinigang* among the Tagalogs -- is found everywhere, because it cools the body in hot weather. Rice is universal, not only as bland background to all food salty, bitter and sour, but in the form of celebratory cakes for feasting and ritual: *puto, suman, potomaya, sapin-sapin, baye-baye, dudol, bibingka, tupig, tinubong,* etc.

Salted fish -- *tuyo, daing, binuro* -- and salty sauces -- *bagoong, patis, guinamus* -- are found wherever there is fish or shrimp in abundance, being made from the excess catch that can thus serve for another day -- to flavor rice, vegetables, and stews. Yet the Ilocano version is mainly of small fish; the Tagalog mainly of small shrimp, except in Balayan where it is of fish aged and reduced to liquid; the Ilonggo and Bikolano versions similarly dark and pasty.

All regions cook almost all foods in vinegar at some time or other. For not only is vinegar cheaply and widely available, being fermented from coconut and nipa sap, or from sugarcane juice, it is also a flavor-giving preservative in a time or place without refrigeration. Thus *kinilaw / kilawin / kilawen* of all kinds depend on "sour power," and so do *paksiw* and *adobo* of fish or shellfish or meat.

Vegetables, which abound in highland or lowland all year round, are part of all native repertoires. Most regions have stews that mix and combine the textures of leaf, seed, flower, branch, bole, root, and fruit ("halaman[g] . . . sari-sari" as in the song). The Ilocano *pinakbet* usually steams together *ampalaya*, okra and *talong* with tomatoes and *bagoong*. The Ilonggo *laswa*, the Leyteño *lawot-lawot*, the Cebuano *law-oy*, combine such items as *alugbate, malunggay*, squash, etc. -- and a bit of shrimp or *bagoong* for flavor.

All this means, therefore, that Filipino food has general characteristics that make it identifiably Filipino. But because our peoples have different terrains and varied ethnic cultures, their food has regional variations -- although definitely more similarities than differences.

Travel the islands, therefore, and with your tongue identify the tastes and flavors that express the culture. Have *binakol* in Iloilo, *pinangat* in Albay, *lawot-lawot* in Tacloban, *pinapaitan* in Laoag, *betute* (stuffed frog) in Pampanga, *tiulang itum* in Jolo, *inihaw na barilis* in Davao, shark *kinilaw* in Catbalogan, *paklay* in Silay. The adventure will telegraph through your palate the regional variants and the recognizable culture that make the savor that is Filipino.

What's Cooking?

The old and the new. The provincial and the pop. The slow and the fast. The past, the present, the future. That's what's cooking in Philippine cuisine. Which means that, as the most popular (people-created, people-processed and people-consumed) segment of popular culture, it is dynamic and changing, living and lively.

IN THE KITCHENS. In spite of urban sprawl and rush, many kitchens still bustle with *sinangag* frying in the morning, from the *lamig* of the night before; with *tapa, longanisa, tosino* or *tuyo*; eggs *estrellado* or *revuelto* -- the farmer's breakfast to fortify the teacher or student rushing to class, the executive or lawyer, the government employee, the urban or agricultural worker. (Later this would become urbanized and given pop names: *tapsilog, tosilog, longsilog*. It would even be packaged in styropore for sale in fast food or take-home shops.)

Still, cooks and housewives do still prepare *adobo* for *baon*, or *sinigang* for dinner, or even the more elaborate *kare-kare*. The general and basic preference of many Filipinos is still Pinoy food eaten with rice, home-cooked rather than store-bought.

Admittedly, many take advantage of convenience technology in tenderizing the *pata* and *lengua* in pressure-cookers; buying frozen dressed chickens; cooking up batches of adobo and storing portions in the freezer; even using sinigang broth packets when there is no time to buy sampaloc or kamias. This technology of convenience and speed is certainly one of the most prominent American influences on Filipino cooking.

Admittedly too, many other families -- especially those in which both husband and wife work -- opt for the toast-and-coffee

breakfast, the sandwich as *baon*, and the instant dinner (frozen *lumpia* from the grocery, barbecue from a stand, *pancit* from a *panciteria*). This situation has also resulted in the *rasyon*, the "private caterer" who cooks and delivers lunch and dinner for families, or offices (e.g. in vans that park outside Makati office buildings, and dispense food in plastic bags), or factories, and thus gets his/her family's food "free." It is not only the busy, however, who resort to this arm of the underground economy. There are also families without a cook, or without the wish to cook, who have food delivered in *fiambreras*, *kalderos*, or plastic bags, and thus provide employment and opportunity for those willing to cook for others.

IN THE STREETS. This is the pop part of the current cuisine. Since the economic crisis, food has sprouted in the streets, both from the need to eat in the urban rush, and from the need to earn cash in the money crush. Where in the 50s barbecue sold on the Boulevard (Dewey then, Roxas now) consisted of chicken drumsticks and pork chunks, now street barbecue has proliferated: chicken wings, breasts, thighs, legs, tails, feet, heads, necks, livers, gizzards, hearts, combs, blood, intestines; whole *lechon manok* on home-made machines; pork ears; squid, camote and banana.

The technology has developed: the free-standing barbecue stand, the home-made rotisserie, the varieties of *sawsawan*, the chicken intestines alrady cleaned, coiled and skewered. The names have gone pop and wild: Adidas (feet), IUD (intestines), Walkman (ears), PAL (wings), helmet (heads), etc. -- showing that these are indeed colloquial, mod, pop food -- food of the young and street-smart; food of the urban rush; food less serious than fun; not alimentation so much as *pamatid gutom*. They go with the multi-colored *sa malamig* drinks; with the ambulant banana-cue and camote-cue. They are stand-up food, in contrast to streetside sit-down food like *goto* and pancit, which are dispensed from pushcarts that arrive complete with tables, stools, heating stoves, tableware, and water for washing.

The food is usually quite good -- otherwise the vendors would lose their walk-by clientele, and their chance to make the day's cash, which is tomorrow's capital and sustenance. An economist has analyzed the streetfood phenomenon as the product of a low-cash economy -- little capital is needed for a barbecue stand, and the returns are instant, and in cash -- no credit cards, no credit.

Nor are the vendors' products identical, for there is room for creativity. The marinades and the *sawsawan* make a difference, each from a private formula. An observer of the phenomenon points out that the taste of the sawsawan actually evolves in the process. Since buyers all dip their sticks into the same sauce bottles, ashy flakes from char-broiling fall into the sauce and change its taste, from just sour-hot (chilis are usual) to a welcome hint of bitterness.

And there are variations to the standard fare. The day-old chicks, for example (dyed yellow and called "Day-O" in San Fernando, Pampanga). And the batter-dipped, fried *balut* served in little bowls with a vinegar-chili dip. Also the *turron* of saba bananas with or without langka. And the peanuts (boiled in shell, garlic-fried with or without skin); corn-nips; mangoes peeled and cut in petals, plastic-wrapped bagoong tucked in; pomelos pre-peeled and sectioned; boiled quail or chicken eggs; *lumpia* filled and rolled on the sidewalk, *siomai* and *siopao* in portable steamers. And of course *balut* and *penoy*, food of the night and (it is generally believed) of virility. The food stalls of Singapore and Malaysia certainly have their counterpart in the liveliness and variety of the streetfood in our cities and towns.

IN THE RESTAURANTS. Just four decades ago, in the innocent 50s, Filipino food was not easy to find in so-called "tablecloth" restaurants. Eating out meant having Spanish food *(lengua, paella, relleno)* or American fare (steaks, fried chicken). Having Filipino food outside the home was "slumming" -- *halo-halo* at Little Quiapo or Central Market; sinangag and tapa (not yet called *tapsi*) at Ambos Mundos; *dinuguan* or *pancit palabok* at the Aristocrat; *cascaron* at Bulakeña. One did not take bosses, foreigners, dates or VIPs to have Filipino food at a restaurant; one served this at home.

Now one certainly does. One takes them to elegant places for it -- formerly to The Nielson Tower for Sorpresa de Balut (shelled, herbed, spiced and baked under a crust); to Via Mare or La Tasca or Seasons for Filipino dishes among the foreign; to Barasoain for Bulakeño home cooking finely served. Or to trendy places like Ang Hang, where the crispy pata is smothered in toasted garlic; or Bangus, where bangus bellies ("prime cuts") may be had in several ways; or Gene's Bistro, where the Pinoy cuisine originated in now-vanished Sulipan between Bulacan and Pam-

panga; or Bistro Remedios and Larry's Bar, where the *haleang* ube is topped with whipped cream, the prawns come in a sauce of *aligue,* and the *tidtad (dinuguan)* is chili-topped and served in handmade pottery.

Or to original and innovative places like Balaw-balaw in Angono, which offers regional dishes like *dinilawan na kanduli,* fried *itik, nilasing na palaka,* and *bayawak "adobong matanda"* style; May Farm at Bamban, Tarlac, and its game repertoire -- wild boar, snipes, deer, tikling, cobra. Or to authentic provincial places like the *bulalohan* in Sto. Tomas, Batangas; Ang Pospas ni Aling Ines in San Mateo, Rizal, where the *lugaw* nestles *bahay itlog;* or Bahay Kawayan in Taytay, where *hito* and *dalag* swim in tanks. Or to specialty restaurants like Cabalen and Patio Mequeni (Kapampangan food).

Or to seek out particular dishes -- *inihaw na panga* at Pinausukan; *lechon de leche* at Kamayan; blue marlin fin and belly at Kusina ni Maria and Nandau; *sisig* and *burong hipon* at Trellis.

Filipino food is now not only considered dignified enough to be served in restaurants; it is actually a crowd-drawer, and hotel outlets and many restaurants serving Spanish, American or Chinese food, offer Filipino dishes as come-ons, as security, as exotica and local color. In other words, it makes money, and is good business.

IN THE FAST-FOOD LANE. It is not only that Jollibee is a very successful Pinoy burger, flavored with chopped onions. And that among its offerings are *pancit palabok,* Manila breakfasts of *tapa, tocino* and *longganisa,* all in styrofoam boxes, complete with paper napkin and plastic fork/knife. Filipino cuisine has also adapted to the fast life with local fast food. This comes in the form of Filipino dishes served in fastfood settings and style, e.g. barbecue, *dinuguan, chicharron, halo-halo, pancit, arroz caldo, mami,* etc. available in minutes, a combination of *turo-turo* and fastfood, thanks to such modern technology as microwave ovens. It includes *adobo* and *menudo* sandwiches; *tapsi, losi, tosi* to go. It comes in the form of fast-food chains of local origin, e.g. burger machines, fried chicken outlets, noodle stands, with, of course, food tuned to local tastes. It includes as well such places as Andok's many stalls, which offer *litsong manok* and *liyempo* read to go, chopped and wrapped up quick, fast and clean.

SA INUMAN. We speak of *pulutan,* of course, the food to pick up with the fingers *(pulot)* and take with drinks. The food for those all-male gatherings and un-fancy beer places where neither women nor entertainment are sought for or welcome, and male companionship and conversation are enshrined. "The range of pulutan," writes Eddy Alegre, "covers the uncooked (green mango, *singkamas, kilawin*); the preserved (peanuts, Chinese *tapa,* European sausages); the grilled, the broiled and the fried (fish, meat, seafood) . . . The choice of drink at most local drinking places is rather limited: beer, gin, rum, whiskey, *tuba, lambanog, basi.* But the choice of pulutan is limitless: legumes, vegetables, birds, pork, beef, chicken, venison, dog meat, goat, eggs, frogs, iguana, crocodile, fish, squid, octopus, shellfish. Cross that with the various ways of cooking them, and one can only marvel at how democratic and adventurous Filipino tastebuds are."

Cross that further with the different drinking places, ranging from marketplace *kambingan* to *ihaw-ihaw* / barbecue beer places to cocktail lounges and bars that offer tapas from native, Chinese, Spanish, American, German, etc. cuisines, and one can only conclude that some of the most active and imaginative consumption of Filipino and Filipinized cuisine is done to the accompaniment of liquor *(pangtulak).*

AT THE FIESTA. This is where the action continues to be provincial, traditional, hospitable. Even when the fiesta is in a city district, the spirit prevails. The host offers the best he can; the guest is not only welcome but desired. As far as she can afford, the housewife fills the table edge-to-edge with delights. Out come the native cooks, tenants, maiden aunts, mothers and grandmothers; the season's savings; the *kawa* and *karahay;* the antique china and silver.

The preparations are long and start early -- fattening chickens, butchering pigs, making sweets, long slow simmering, communal chopping and cooking. The dishes are many, and eloquent about the ancestry of Filipino cuisine and the generosity of Philippine hospitality. The Spanish heritage is represented by *relleno, morcon, galantina, lengua, callos,* etc., and such sweets as *pastillas, yemas, leche flan,* Brazo de Mercedes. The Chinese influence is spelled out in the special pancit from the repertoire of the clan's best cook. The favorite native dishes of the region are trotted out: prawns and

bangus from the family fishpond, venison from hometown hunters, the best fishes and shellfish from market *suki, bringhe* and *kare-kare, lechon* and *asadong alimango*. There are salads, pies and cakes from the American heritage, or a giant *lapu-lapu* covered with mayonnaise and rainbow-sprinkled with chopped eggs, beets and pickles (both American and Spanish). There may even be German sausages and French pastries, but the occasion and meaning are Filipino.

What's cooking, then? All the above and more -- proving that old and new, provincial and pop, traditional and high-tech, all strains of Filipino cuisine coexist, alive and well, lively and changing, drawing from the past, nourishing the present, and predicting the future.

Books and Other Feasts

Food in Philippine Literature

A friend has pointed out that few Philippine novels in English have passages on food, while English and American novels are filled with steaks and chops, cakes and sherbets, banquets and intimate meals for two. He was right. There are a few, however, and they do reflect the flavor (pardon the pun) food can give to the texture of life in a story. Here are some samples to ruminate on.

JOSE RIZAL'S FISHING PICNIC. " 'Not yet!' Aunt Isabel called out to the boatman's son . . . 'We must get the sinigang ready so the fish can go directly from the water to the broth.' . . . Andeng, Maria Clara's foster sister, was reputed to be an excellent cook . . . She prepared rice water, tomatoes, and kamias . . . The other girls peeled squash, shucked peas or cut spring onions into pieces the size of cigarettes . . . Aunt Isabel took command and assigned the various kinds of fish to different native dishes: 'The *ayungin* is good for *sinigang*. Leave the *bia* for *escabeche*. The *dalag* and the *buan-buan* for the *pesa* . . . Put them in the net so they can stay in the water. The lobsters to the frying pan! The *banak* is to be roasted, wrapped in banana leaves and stuffed with tomatoes . . . There was music in the air; smoke rose in gay and tenuous whirlwinds from the earthen stoves; in the boiling pot the broth sang words of comfort to the poor fish . . ." (Chapter 23, A Fishing Expedition, *Noli Me Tangere*).

ESTRELLA ALFON AND A SEASIDE TOWN. "I suppose, to all of us, sometimes there comes a dream. Of being at peace with one's neighbors and the whole world . . . Of forgetting what ambition is beyond eating today's meal whether it is a fish sweet with

the freshness of the sea, or shrimps caught with bare hands from under the stones in the path of the whispering stream, or one of my precious well-beloved chickens brought to a boil and flavored with the minty tang of the *tanglad* grasses growing in abundance on the hills . . . Under the coconut trees' yielding fruit of unsurpassed coolness . . . listening to the wind passing through the walls fashioned of coconut leaves . . . partaking of giant *langka* with the pulp exuding aroma like perfume . . . the sweet tamarind, the thick fleshy pulp of *sineguelas;* all of that, a dream well-remembered." ("Compostela")

NICK JOAQUIN AND SPANISH MEMORIES. "Malaga where . . . alas! -- he would never return again: nor to Palma, or Toledo, or Tarragona, or Seville: nor to the sweet wines of those places, whether cold in the cask or warm in the goatskin: nor to fish stewed in ripe lemons: nor to chicken boiled in thick olive-oil: nor to *buñuelos* during the *ferias*: nor to *puchero* on Sundays . . ." ("The Legend of the Dying Wanton")

CARMEN GUERRERO NAKPIL AND AN ERMITA CHRISTMAS. "Our favorite hunting-ground was the home of some spinster aunts . . . Laid out on the dining room table in their home on Christmas morning would be an assortment of sweetmeats, some brought from Bulacan and Pampanga and even Spain and America, but mostly prepared in their own family kitchen. There were towering *castillos* (veritable monuments of candied pastry), *pastillas* wrapped in decorated tissue paper, newly-unwrapped *tamales* and all manner of candies and bon-bons. These were pressed upon us with great insistence . . ." ("A Christmas Memoir")

CARLOS BULOSAN AND PANGASINAN RURAL LIFE. "I found the small oil-lamp where my father kept it . . . I lighted it and went to the kitchen. There was no food left. I went to the rice bin and filled the cooking pot. I prepared string beans and mixed them with small slices of beef. When the pot began to bubble on the roaring stove, I heard my father and brother coming noisily through the gate with their implements. They went to the water trough to wash their feet and hands; then they came into the house and asked me if dinner was ready. We sat on the floor and ate in the twilight with our bare hands. We spread the salted fish on the

steaming rice and soaked it with the broth from the vegetable pot. When we finished eating my father started washing the polished coconut shells which had been our plates and drinking cups for many generations. I went outside the house to feed our dog with cold rice." *(America is in the Heart)*

NVM GONZALEZ AND PAN DE SAL. "The bread of salt! How did it get that name? From where did its flavor come; through what secret action of flour and yeast? At the risk of being jostled from the counter by other early buyers, I would push my way into the shop so that I might watch the men who, stripped to the waist, worked their flat wooden spades in and out of the glowing maw of the oven. Why did the bread come nut-brown and the size of my little fist? And why did it have a pair of lips convulsed into a painful frown? In the half-light of the street, and hurrying, the paper bag pressed to my chest, I felt my curiosity a little gratified by the oven-fresh warmth of the bread I was proudly bringing home for breakfast." ("The Bread of Salt")

AND A PARTY IN MINDORO. "The sight of so much silver and china confused me. There was more food before us than I had ever imagined. I searched in my mind for the names of the dishes; but my ignorance appalled me. I wondered what had happened to the boxes of food that the Buenavista ladies had sent up earlier. In a silver bowl was something, I discovered, that appeared like whole egg yolks that had been dipped in honey and peppermint. The seven of us in the orchestra were all of one mind about the feast; and so, confident that I was with friends, I allowed my covetousness to have its way and not only stuffed my mouth with this and that confection but also wrapped up a quantity of those egg-yolk things in several sheets of napkin paper. None of my companions had thought of doing the same, and it was with some pride that I slipped the packet under my shirt. There, I knew, it would not bulge." ("The Bread of Salt")

CASIANO T. CALALANG AND A BATANGAS CHRISTMAS. "Sa ibabaw ng dalawang ipinagdugtong na mesa ay nagsisiksikan ang pinggan ng sarisaring pagkain. May lechon de leche, manok na nilaga, kaldereta, hamong hiniwa ng manipis, at ensaladang nagpapawis pa ang sisidlan dahil sa kalamigan. Iyan

ang mga galing sa Maynila. May talabang nakakapit pa sa malaperlas na talukap, ulang na waring nagliliyab sa kapulahan, bangus na inihaw sa saha, at atsarang papaya, pino ang pagkakayadyad, at lumalangoy sa sukang timplang matamis. Iyan ang kay Idang. Sa gitna naman ng hapag ay nandoon ang tatlong frutera na kinatutumpukan ng mga saging na lakatan at sintunes na malaki. May mga platito ring kinalalagyan ng sinangag na kasoy. Iyan naman ang sa amin. Sa isang mesita na lamang ipinatong ang sarisaring matamis: mazapan de pili, pastillas na leche, haleang ubi at makapuno." ("Samantalang Nakatindig ang Puno")

AND BREAKFAST. "Ang dalawa naming kolehiyala ay nag-iinin pa sa karatig na silid, isang palatandaan ng pagiging kolehiyala at bakasyonista na marahil ay itinuturo sa kolehiyo. Ang hapag ng agahan ay isang oras nang naghihintay sa kanila -- may putong simputi ng bulak at kinayod na niyog na gayon din kaputi, may pandesal na nawalan na ng lutong sa kapanghalan, may itlog at longganisa na nakapatda sa kultang mantika sa malamig na pinggan, at may sikulate na ang takip ay tinuluan na ng pawis sa kahihintay. Wala pa ring palatandaan na ang mga anak ko ay gusto nang gumising." ("Samantalang Nakatindig ang Puno")

Of course there is food in Philippine literature in English and in the vernaculars -- in fiction, in essays and memoirs. How can the Filipino writer think about life without a few thoughts on food?

A Cookbook and a Billiard Table

Pura Villanueva Kalaw, queen of the first Manila Carnival in 1908, leader in the fight for women's political and property rights, writer, wife of newspaperman and director of the National Library Teodoro M. Kalaw, mother of the late Senator Maria Kalaw Katigbak, the late Teddy Kalaw, Purita Kalaw Ledesma and Evelina Kalaw Pines, is known for so many things in so many areas of life that it is not often recalled that she wrote one of the earliest Filipino cookbooks.

The circumstances of the writing are in themselves a story. Years after the famous *El Renacimiento* libel suit regarding "Aves de Rapiña," in which Teodoro M. Kalaw was accused, and after which he was pardoned by Governor-General F.B. Harrison, a simple corn in his toe developed into gangrene and his leg had to be amputated above the knee. The disability made Kalaw give up any thought of being an active politician, and instead devoted himself to writing. His doctors prescribed exercise, since Kalaw was showing a tendency to high blood pressure because of his intellectual work. The best form of exercise for him, they said, was playing billiards, so that he could walk a bit and use his legs. The young couple had no money for a billiard table, and so Pura Villanueva Kalaw, whose determination had seen her through all her other accomplishments, decided to earn enough money to buy one. She wrote a cookbook.

In the words of her daughter, Maria Kalaw Katigbak in her mother's biography, *Legacy*: "Thus was born the first cookbook of Filipino dishes, first published in Spanish, and later translated into . . . Tagalog, Bicol, Ilocano, Pampango, Visayan, and Cebuano. She collaborated with the government's nutrition campaign . . . It was not a simple cookbook. It carried her message of nationalism

in the choice of food, in nutrition, in simplicity of diet, and in thriftiness of preparation. She laid all these down in the introduction to the book, in interspersed comments within the recipes themselves, and in a Decalogue for Women for Cooking."

The little cookbook -- about the size of the novenas and *corridos* being sold in churchyards then -- is called *Condimentos Indigenas* (Native Recipes). It contains the products of field research -- recipes gathered by the author from housewives and accomplished young ladies proud to be known for their cooking specialties. Among these were Agueda Diaz de Guariña of Sorsogon, Victoria Peralta de Paredes of Ilocos, Teresa Veloso de Vamenta of Cebu, Emilia Maguiat de Kalaw of Batangas, Maria Villanueva de Salas of Iloilo, Petra de Taylor of Cebu, Rosalia Vasquez of Ilocos, and Misses Arsenia K. Silva and Rosario Kalaw Katigbak of Batangas, Ms. Aguilar of Pasig, and Ms. Shuck of Mindanao.

The introduction to the cookbook could very well serve to reintroduce it today's housewives: "In these days when the price of imported foods has gone beyond the resources of many families, we place in the hands of our women these recipes to suggest that they not diminish their nutrition for reasons of economy, but instead use native foods . . . With preferential attention towards thrift, we also include here some recipes for leftovers of the day before . . . There is no work as important for a housewife as that of working in her kitchen with love. Women who think that they degrade themselves by performing kitchen work have a wrong concept of their duties. The health, the efficiency, and happiness of their family depend a great deal on its nutrition. The cleanliness and ventilation of the kitchen deserve greater attention than the sala, which is used only to receive visitors."

"Imported foods, in order to be preserved for crossing the seas and staying fresh in our climate, sometimes require elaborate chemicals bad for the health. On the other hand, our native foods remain fresh to retain all the richness endowed by wise Nature." (Translation by Maria Kalaw Katigbak, in *Legacy*)

The flexibility of Philippine cuisine is well demonstrated in these recipes from the second decade. Measurements, for example, are in "vasos" (glasses), "tazones" (large cups), "cucharadas" (spoonfuls), "cucharones" (ladles, large spoons). The modern housewife would probably quibble: How large a glass? a cup? Is that a soup spoonful or a measuring tablespoonful? How large a ladle were

they using? But Filipino cooking was ever based on common sense, and not on exact Western-style measures. It is as large a glass, cup, spoon, ladle as necessary, as right, as sensible for the recipe in progress. The intuitiveness of Filipino cooking, the flexibility of recipes (no meat for *sinigang*? use shrimps, or fish; no *lapulapu*? take *ayungin*) lie "beneath the skin" of these truly native recipes.

Here is an example, a recipe credited to "P. V. de K." herself:

TORTILLA DE PATOLA. Ingredients: 1 patola (sponge gourd), 2 eggs, 3 chopped-up tomatoes, 2 cloves garlic, 3 spoons lard. Sauté the garlic, tomatoes and patola. In a clean carajay, cook the tortilla in the remaining lard. It is also in this manner that a tortilla of *upo* (white squash) is prepared.

POTAGE DE BERENGENAS (Eggplant). 5 large eggplants cut in one-inch pieces, 5 tomatoes, 1 onion, 1 spoon of lard, 2 spoons of *bagoong* or half a cup of fresh shrimps; the pure milk of one coconut. Sauté garlic and later add the other condiments. After 5 minutes, add a cup of water, and when the eggplant is cooked, add the coconut milk and remove from the fire after the first boiling (P.V. de K.)

MUNGGO CON HOJAS DE BALATONG O KIBAL (leaves of stringbean or *paayap*). 1 cup of munggo; 1/2 cup shrimps or dried fish or 3 spoons of bagoong; 1 plate of tender leaves of kibal or balatong; 2 sliced tomatoes. Boil in two glasses of water the munggo, the tomatoes and the fish or shrimp, until soft. In a plate, mash the leaves of kibal or balatong in salt to remove their water and soften them; wash them well and add them to the munggo, seasoning to taste with salt.

One of the points in her Decalogue bears quoting as well: "Bless all foods as manna from heaven. Regulate the hours for serving meals, and let these hours be the most pleasant for peace and happiness. Present your dishes attractively, do not waste even a particle of nourishment, because from small quantities are formed the larger sums . . ."

Perhaps the things to remember about *Condimentas Indigenas* (1918), however, are that its motives were love and nationalism, and that Teodoro M. Kalaw got his billiard table.

Pasteleria at Reposteria, 1919

Down by the Quezon City Welcome sign, incongruously behind some Grand Inihaw-type spots featuring "bold" starlets, lie the remains of one of the oldest extant publishing houses of the Philippines -- Libreria Martinez. Established in 1902, it used to publish the de la Merced *Pasyon, awit* and *corrido* (e.g. *Buhay na pinagdaanan ni Emilia na anac ni Artemio at ni Angela sa cahariang Europa; Lihim ng Dalawang Batas mula sa Paraiso*); novels (Faustino Aguilar's *Pinaglahuan*, 1907; *Ang Pag-ibig at ang Babaye*, 1923, by Jose Villamor), books on writing loveletters and courting through flowers and fans (*Patnubay ng Pagsinta/antas ng manga paraan/at nang/Magtagumpay sa Pag-ibig* by Pascual H. Poblete, etc.).

In more recent times, its main fare consisted of Rizal works (e.g. the *Noli* and *Fili* in Tagalog translation) and books about him. When we discovered it in the early 70s we burrowed through its stack of old publications, consulted with the old lady who owned it, and with the two kind ladies who ran it day to day, and stumbled onto a lot of rare finds, e.g. first editions of *Pinaglahuan* (for seven pesos), of *Urbana at Felisa* and of Teodoro M. Kalaw's *Hacia la tierra del Zar*, of which at that time, even his daughter Maria Kalaw Katigbak had not found a copy; and leather-bound editions of Spanish textbooks. Today very little stock is left, but one can still find *awit* and *corrido*, copies of the zarzuela *Anak ng Dagat* by Patricio Mariano -- and a cookbook.

In all this wealth of Filipiniana, you see, there lurks one cookbook: *Pasteleria at Reposteria / Francesa at Española (Aclat na ganap na naglalaman ng maraming / palacad sa pag-gawa ng lahat ng mga bagay -- / bagay na matamis at mga pasteles / Ni P. R. Macosta / pinamutihan ng mga larauang nahinguil sa pinag-uusapan / Isinalin sa*

uicang tagalog ni / Crispulo Trinidad / Professor sa Latinidad / Maynila, 1919 / Limbagan ni J. Martinez / 253 Cabildo, Intramuros. / Tel. 3283.

Amazing, indeed: a translation, probably of a cookbook in Spanish, on pastries sweet and otherwise, by a Professor of Latinidad, in 1919 -- for the housewife of those times desirous of bringing foreign urbanity into her cooking and her home. The copy I bought in the 70s still has a cover, and the illustration is an elaborately decorated tower of pastry, captioned: *Croquembouchenq caraniuan*. A croquembouche or croque-en-bouche "means all kind of patisserie which crunches and crumbles in the mouth," says the Larousse Gastronomique. The typical one is a tower of *choux* profiteroles or cream puffs filled with sugar, and arranged one on top of the other, into a towerlike structure.

It blows my mind, to think of the 1920s housewives engineering and serving such towers of sweetness at their dinners and fiestas -- often enough to have it called "croquembucheng caraniuan." What would be the out-of-the-ordinary croquembouche then? What is this treasure-trove of Philippine-made patisserie that we still have to discover? Could its secrets perhaps lie within the covers of this modest, 312-page book, which cost me P3.60 in 1970, and has now risen to P20 for the few surviving copies (sans cover)?

We enter into the world of the book through the front matter, of course. The *Paunang Salita* starts: "Ang carunungan tuncol sa mabuting cabuhayan ay nagcaroon ng caniyang mga campon sa lahat ng panahon magmula pa sa mga capanahunang malalayo, at ang bilang nila'y naragdagan sa tacbo ng mga daan daang taon." The purpose, therefore: knowledge of the good life as developed through the centuries.

"Inacala naming papaquinabangan ang maghayag ng isang aclat na pagcaquitaan ng mga dating cocinero at ng mga babae sa canilang mga bahay, ng lubhang maraming iba't ibang paraang icasusunod nila sa gusto ng mga lalong pihicang maibiguin sa masasarap na pagcain." Its audience: chefs and housewives, and discriminating lovers of good food.

It goes on to outline the division of the book into six parts: 1. "pagmamasa, mga pasta at iba pa"; 2. "ang mga pagcaing matitindi o lalong masustanciang maiinit"; 3. "ang mga ibong o hayop na nahuli sa pangangaso"; 4. "ang mga malalaquing hayop at mga entremeses na niyari"; 5. "ang mga entremeses na mainit, mga iba't ibang pastas, cremas at helados"; and 6. "ang mga maliliit

na pastas, pastillas at ang mga matamis." An examination of the Table of Contents (at the back of the book, French/Spanish style), however, shows that there are three principal parts: 17 chapters in the first, 16 in the second, and 18 in the third.

Thus, although six parts are announced in the preface, three are recorded in the table of contents and in the running titles. The recipes, however, range from *Pagmamasa ng hojaldre* through hot pastries like "Rellenong fino na may mga isdang halobaybay," through "Pastel ng foie gras na may casamang trufas" to small pastries like "buñuelos a la española" (very few of them, though). No *cremas* or *helados*. Here's the mystery in the six-vs-three parts: could there be another book, containing the last three parts? Could the six parts have been planned, but found too large for the book? Could the author have changed his mind, forgotten, been mistaken? Lovely task for a bibliographical sleuth.

For this piece, however, let us go on examining the book. The illustrations are interesting, because they seem lifted out of a French pastry book: *Mga empanadas a la bechamel, Mga empanadillas na tinapay na pinamutihan ng mga codornices* (quail), *al gratin, Vol au vent a la Nesle, Timbal ng macarrones a la milanesa*, an astounding confection called *Turon a la Parisien*, and one that looks like a medieval fort, called *Flan ng peras a la germana*. There is also an illustration of the cardboard mold used for some of these architectural creations.

Since all cookbooks are social documents -- recording not only the intentions and perceptions of the writers (in this case, the translators), but also the values and practices of the readers (in this case, the cooks and housewives of the 20s) -- Pasteleria at Reposteria is indeed intriguing, interesting, inviting. I would like to find out, for example, how many copies of the book were printed, how many were sold, at what price the book was sold (to indicate the range of the market), and if these recipes were indeed used in ordinary (well, let's say elite) households. It would be ideal if one could find a grandmother somewhere -- 1920 not being too far away in time -- who actually used these recipes.

Not having that external evidence, however, let us look at the internal evidence, namely the recipes. Here is one.

MUMUNTING BISCOCHOS SUFLADOS, NA MAY AZAHAR. Magbating magaling ng tatlong clara ng itlog; haluan ng 250

gramos ng azucar na pinaraan sa salaang sutla at 31 gramos ng azahar escarchado, na tinadtad ng bahagya. Isasalin ang handang ito sa maliit na cahang quinunutan, na 2 centimetros ang diametro at gayon din ang taas, datapua pag-iingatang huag silang pupunuin cundi hanggang calahati lamang; at capag ang mga bizcochos ay nasa canicanilang mga caha tatacban sila ng isang capang macapal ng caonti ng azucar na pinaraan sa salaang sutla, at ilalagay agad sa isang lugar na halumigmig upang tulungan ang azucar sa pagcatunao. Pagcatapos ilalagay sila sa hurno sa init na malamlam at aalisin silang taglay ang mabuting culay.

Itong maliit na bizcochong ito'y dapat tumaas ng caonti sa ibabao ng caja, bumuo ng isang sufladong magaan, lubhang maliuanag at maquintab.

TINY SOUFFLE BISCUITS WITH ORANGE BLOSSOM. Beat well three egg whites; mix in 250 gr. sugar which has been sieved through silk (therefore very fine, or confectioner's sugar), and 31 gr. frozen orange blossom, which has been lightly chopped. Pour this mixture into small pastry cups (of fluted paper) about 2 cm. in diameter and height, being careful to fill them only half-full, not to the top. When the bizcochos are in the cups, cover each one with a slightly thick coating of sugar (sieved in silk), and set aside immediately in a cool place, to allow the sugar to melt. Bake in a warm oven and remove when they develop a good color. These little bizcochos should rise a bit above the pastry shells, and should become light, very bright, and shiny souffles.)

Reading through this and other recipes, one sees, first of all, the availability of the ingredients of foreign cuisine. Here it is orange blossom, and little fluted pastry or bonbon cups; in others it is *fines herbes*, truffles, almonds and pistachios, apples. Also available is the vocabulary of this foreign cuisine: *bizcochos suflados, azahar escarchado*, etc., which means that foreign cuisine had indeed entered the kitchens and the lives of the Filipino elite of those times. (We must assume, even without statistics, that this book and books of this kind were read, otherwise no one would have ventured into publishing them.)

Certainly available and indeed necessary was the leisure for this kind of cuisine. It is not the quick *guisa, prito, sangag* of ordinary cooking, or even the more leisurely *ihaw, sigang* or *laga*.

This kind of cooking requires elaborate preparations, the deliberate gathering of ingredients, the making of designs and molds, artistic decoration and finishing, time and equipment. It also requires a desire for the foreign cuisine, for the culture it represents, and for the lifestyle to go with it.

The vocabulary speaks of a non-technological time, when temperatures were poetically (*halumigmig*) and impressionistically (read: inexactly) stated (*init na malamlam*). How gently, how indirectly, we are told about cooking temperatures! That was a different world, unintruded into by oven thermometers and microwaves. And how lovely to be told what beauty the expected product should have: "magaan, lubhang maliuanag at maquintab" -- light in weight, bright in color, shiny. This for a tiny biscocho only a bit more than two centimeters high. Today's recipes so tersely end with: Serves 6!

All this -- time, world, spirit, space -- and much more can be read in this cookbook. Now if only I could find someone who had actually used it . . .

Dream Food

In book-rich Michigan, where for six summer weeks I studied and taught at Ann Arbor, in an institute for modern Southeast Asian literature, we prowled the second-hand bookstores, and often discovered Filipiniana with joy. One book, *Recipes out of Bilibid* (George W. Stewart, 1946), revealed a new side to the still-unravelling story of World War II.

Dorothy Wagner, compiler, starts the foreword with: "When my nephew, Chick Fowler, sailed for Manila in October of 1941, he carried with him . . . the necessary equipment of a mounted officer bound for the tropics," and also "a huge box of books and a case of champagne to ward off seasickness." When, 40 months later, he returned to San Francisco, he had one small cloth bag, borrowed clothes, three bullets embedded in his body, and beri-beri, which had impaired his eyesight.

The limp cloth bag contained two treasures: a Filipino knife he'd hidden well from his captors, and a little bundle of letters, the envelopes of which had been split and used "to write in crowded pencilled lines the recipes for unusual dishes that he had collected from his fellow prisoners of war." The men had survived the suspense, hardship and cruelty by means of the armor of humor and memory. The "ceaseless clawing of hunger, spreading from the nerves of the stomach to every fibre of their being" they countered by talking about food they had once relished. They talked in the future tense, remembering flavors and feasts, and describing with painstaking accuracy the dishes they longed for and were determined to enjoy again after the war.

Chick (Col. Halstead C. Fowler) "began his collection after the Death March and his removal to Davao; he continued it till the day of his rescue from Bilibid." Some of the men who gave him their

dream recipes had been mess sergeants or ships' cooks, others were amateurs who had cooked on hikes or hunting trips; most of the best were from men who, as boys, had helped their mothers prepare holiday feasts. Dorothy Wagner, in compiling the recipes (American, British, Chinese, French, Italian, Javanese, Mexican, Polish, Russian, Scandinavian, Swiss and Filipino), pays tribute to the mothers who brought love, patience and skill to the "endlessly repeated labor" of feeding their families, and made each kitchen "the glowing heart of a beloved home," women whose "Martha tasks had been transmuted into Mary-tributes, serving to sustain their sons in their long, . . . cruel ordeal."

A Filipino dish contributed by Major A. N. Powell, U.S.A. Reserve, is "Chicken in Cocoanut": Parboil a young chicken about 25 minutes, then disjoint it. Cut off the top of a coconut, pour out the milk, score and partially shred the flesh with a fork. Salt and pepper the chicken heavily, rubbing the seasonings into the flesh, and then pack it, the milk and shredded meat into the shell. Seal the top on with biscuit dough, and bake in a moderate oven for an hour.

Powell was an American born and raised in the Philippines. "His father, who had practised law in Cebu since 1900, was past 60 at the outbreak of war, but both he and his son volunteered for service . . ." Powell knew native handicrafts, and gave invaluable help to his fellow-prisoners by making bamboo bunks, kapok mattresses, and "dozens of ingenious alleviations for the injured and helpless. Both father and son were lost on the December 13th ship."

Recipes out of Bilibid speak not only about the war, history, and survival, but especially about the human spirit, which in the darkest of days finds hope in memories of pleasure and of home.

Mother Cuisine

Where does a cuisine begin? In the home, of course where a family must not only be fed, but also loved, nurtured, and made happy. Also in the field, certainly, where hunters and gatherers, planters and warriors must take nourishment and gain strength. But surely it is most often born in the home where women --- and some men -- busy the kitchen with their labor, their devotion, their invention. In the field one may be inventive with whatever presents itself as food; in the home one must be creative with what was available (from the hunt, from the budget), and so one devotes time to the task, attention to the needs and likes of the family, invention for their and the cook's own pleasure.

In the Philippines, before the markets and *carinderias*, the restaurants and the cooking schools, there were the mothers, sisters, aunts and grandmothers of our lives, cooking every meal, and ultimately creating what we call Philippine cuisine. They were the ones who devised the products of field and forest, river and sea, into our native *sinigang* and *laing, pinais* and *pakbet*. They were the ones who adapted foreign cooking methods and formulae into our *pansit* (Chinese), *achara* (Indian), *apritada* (Spanish), *pritong manok* (American). Who but they would have the patience to debone a chicken and stuff it with ground meat, sausages, *pate de foie gras*, truffles, pickles, and the like to make a *relleno* or *galantina* for Christmas?

This mother cooking is documented and celebrated in THE PHILIPPINE COOKBOOK, written by Virginia Roces de Guzman and Nina Daza Puyat, published by Bookmark, and launched July 11, 1990. "Filipino society is basically matriarchal," the authors explain in the preface. "The oldest woman in a clan -- the matriarch -- is loved, honored, and almost unhesitatingly obeyed . . . At family

get-togethers she invariably takes center stage. On Sundays, when many clans get together for a meal, she indulges all by preparing their favorite dishes -- those timeless recipes handed down by mothers to their sons and daughters. This book is a compilation of such recipes."

It is a lovely, practical book in a ring binder -- so that one can take out the recipes to use in the kitchen; also so that one can add other recipes when, as the authors plan, they publish some more. The 104 recipes are divided into Soups (10), Meat and Poultry (39), Vegetable (12), Fish and Seafood (17), Rice and Noodles (9), and Desserts (17), all of them gathered from the authors' families and friends. Some were described verbally; some used non-standard or archaic measurements -- or perhaps no measurements at all. All were therefore kitchen-tested by the authors, whose qualifications for the job are well known, Ginny being one of the owners and originators of Sugar House and Sugar's, and Nina having trained and worked in Paris and in the restaurants, there and here, of her mother Nora Daza. (A second printing produced a paperback edition, and as of mid-1994 a new edition with 50 more recipes was in preparation.)

Reading through the recipes is like peeking into family kitchens and get-togethers. There is, for example, the Pancit Molo of Tessie Locsin, served with *biscocho*, perhaps for a mah-jong merienda. This is quite different from the often pale restaurant product, since the dumplings are filled with pork, shrimp, minced garlic, and onion, and the broth melds the savor of a large native chicken in the stock, and the flavor of sautéed garlic, onion, and shredded chicken meat. *Lang-lang*, which Lenny Guerrero of Costa Brava used to tell me was reputedly the favorite merienda of Jose Rizal, is seen here in the version of Marina Antonio -- she who taught not only artistry and craft to her sons Chito and Ramon, daughter Malu, and grandchildren Vicky and Letlet Veloso, but also good eating and cooking. In the broth are pork and shrimp balls, *sotanghon*, *taingang daga*, flaked chicken, and *chicharo*.

During Tayag's famous, inexhaustible table of plenty is represented here by *Kilawin Capangpangan* -- pork *kasim*, liver, and lungs stripped and chopped, marinated and sautéed. Each recipe has a side-bar of information or inspiration (e.g. a proverb), and this one has a note on *pulutan* also called *pambara* ("anything solid to clog one's throat . . . a convenient excuse to guzzle more beer . . .")

Judith Escaño Daez contributes *Halang-halang*, chicken simmered with ginger, to which is added sliced green papaya, coconut milk, and sili leaves. Anita Young's *Pato Binondo* (for which chicken may be substituted) has a duck stuffed with leeks, onion and ginger, marinated in Worcestershire sauce, rice wine, soy sauce, and brown sugar, along with black mushrooms and potatoes.

Ginny's mother Marietta Adriano Roces cooks pork *pata* (only the front leg, mind) with soy sauce, brown sugar, bay leaf, cracked pepper-corns, and *castañas*. *Tondo-tondo*, contributed by Inocencia Reyes Roces, has lean pork and chicken thighs, liver and gizzards marinated, skewered, coal-grilled or oven-broiled -- and traditionally served with *sinigang*.

Quekiam, in Adelina Reyes Cruz's version, is not in rolls but in patties, with a radish relish. Felisa Delgado's *Longganiza de Hamon* and *de Recado* remind us that in the old days breakfast sausages were made at home (one recipe makes 48 longganizas) from pigs butchered in the backyard, with every bit used for large households, in a feat of creative cooking and good management.

Among the vegetable dishes are Asuncion Vera Perez's *Pinangat* (*gabi* leaves and stalks, with cooked shrimp, pork *liempo*, *bagoong*, *siling labuyo*, thick coconut milk), Daisy Olaguer's *Laing*, Cely Kalaw's *Bicol Express* (*siling haba* cooked with pork, garlic, onion, coconut milk and *bagoong*), the *Panara* of Salome Limgenco Tan (publisher Lorie Tan's grandmother) and Sylvia Montilla's high-fiber and fat-free *Laswa* -- an Ilonggo favorite of mixed vegetables (*sitaw*, *okra*, *sayote*, *alugbate* and eggplant) cooked with shrimp.

Fish and seafood, which are among the best-loved of Filipino *ulam* (7,100 islands provide the longest coastline in the world; our geography includes miles of rivers, rivulets, streams, flooded rice fields, etc.), include *Sinaing na Tulingan* cooked with tamarind juice (Linda Saludo Tangco), *Kinilaw* with *dayap* juice and peel, *siling labuyo* and coconut milk (Edith Fabella Palaez), *Sugpo sa Gata* (Regina Bernasconi Tuason), the *Bacalao a la Vizcaina* beloved in and out of Lent (Letty Lizares del Rosario), and a unique *Spicy Tuyo in Olive Oil* which Marietta Asriano Roces suggests combining with grilled *longganisa*, scrambled eggs, tomato/siling labuyo/vinegar salad, and *sinangag* for a Power Breakfast.

Among the rice and noodle dishes are *Paella de Pata* by Matilde Fun and *Bringhe* (the native paella) by Flor Yap; the *Pancit Lomi* of Julia Teehankee and *Pancit Malabon* of Angela Villonco. The des-

serts should make anyone's sweet tooth ache with longing: *Banana Dumpling with Kalamansi Sauce* (Connie Pascal), *Natilla* (Lily de Asis), *Pandan Jade* (Emma Rustia Tan), *Guinomis* (Cecil Adriano Roces), *Mango Charlotte* (Ginny de Guzman), and others.

There are of course men who do not hesitate to man the kitchen and contribute to Filipino food and culture. Hurray for these brave and creative cooks, among them: Aquiles (Achi) Diaz de Rivera, whose *Ajete (Salsa Monja)*, a divine relish for roasts or steamed seafood, originated in the Sta. Clara monastery in Intramuros (probably the one referred to by Rizal in the *Noli*), and was passed down the family generations by Bonifacio Agustin, music maestro at the monastery, and Achi's great-grandfather. The late Jimmy Ongpin, known gourmet, who is represented by a recipe for *chicharon*. Eligio Teehankee, whose "1-2-3 Chicken" wings are flavored with ginger, rice wine, vinegar, and soy sauce. Chitong Reyes, whose Shadylane Pigeons (or quail) are rich with mushrooms, *pâté de foie*, and sherry or brandy. Antique expert/collector Martin Tinio, whose *Adobong Antigo* calls for *buko* and *vino blanco* or five-year-old rum. Jesus Marcos Roces, whose Spanish Style Stuffing has ground pork with celery, ham, raisins, capers, and mushrooms.

This peek into the cooking pots and lifestyles of some families makes one realize how much culinary wealth hides, grows, and brings pleasure in Philippine homes, where in truth our mother cuisine develops. It also makes one hope for more, more, more, before heirloom recipes disappear in the transience of mortality and memory.

Contrary Thoughts for Valentine's Day

"Why did you send in 'Notes on Food and Love I and II' so far ahead of Valentine's Day?" asked my editor.

Because (I did not answer) I did not want to do the obvious, and write about aphrodisiacs for Valentine's Day. Just as we iconoclasts wear our red dresses on other days, send vegetables to loved ones instead of flowers, and funny clippings instead of cards, and stay home with home-cooked meals instead of crowding the restaurants and adding to the traffic jams, I did not want to do the usual, the expected. I felt justified when, one year, friends who own restaurants reported that their business had dropped — because people who had made reservations could not get to their tables because traffic was gridlocked in Makati -- because everyone felt they had to eat out on Valentine's Day. No parking for the customers, therefore no customers for the restaurants, who could not accept walk-ins because their tables had been reserved for Valentine couples. As a result: frayed nerves all around, rather than the mood of love.

My advice: next year, stay home on Valentine's Day. What better place to be with your loved one than the home in which you consecrated your love? Or than in your apartment, or your family home or his family home — or any place that you enjoy — rather than a car in choked traffic, or a crowded restaurant, or an overpriced ballroom dripping with red balloons and artificial emotion?

Express your love in alternative, imaginative ways. Send a letter instead of a store-bought card, a home-made card instead of a telegram with a message picked out of a book. Send the flowers of your thoughts instead of driving florists mad by ordering flowers that have to be delivered by a certain time on the town's most traffic-mad day. In fact, forget about Valentine's Day, that bor-

rowed and commercial feast -- and tell the god of your idolatry of your love on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday -- of the ordinary weeks of every month, on any day except February 14.

There! I finally had the courage to write an anti-Valentine column.

But is food (or a food column) connected with love? Of course! Remember the movie Tom Jones, in which man and woman savored their joints of beef (or was it mutton? or chicken?) while their eyes devoured each other? The food was only a metaphor, and a prelude.

Remember the picnic in Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere*, where the *sinigang* broth was readied first, before the fishnets were even dipped into the water, so that the fish could go straight into delicious death? And how Andeng, Maria Clara's foster sister, who was reputed to be an excellent cook, was "helped or hindered by some who perhaps wanted a place in her affections"? She was cooking for love, and they were hovering for love, and it was all non-verbal language of love. It was also the occasion for Iday to play the harp (and speak in sounds rather than in words), and for Maria Clara to sing "Dulces las horas en la propia patria" -- causing the girls' eyes to fill with tears, and Ibarra to seem vexed, probably because the message was of love of country and not of countryman.

Of course food is inevitably connected with love. The food a wife or mother cooks from day to day -- think of all the meals prepared and dishes washed and rewashed in one child's childhood or a couple's married life -- is certainly an expression of love generous and unending. And meals shared are often the most concrete manifestations of lovers' regard for each other.

In olden times, when boys and girls (and men and women) worried about what was proper to give each other, food was almost always proper -- candy, chocolates, a home-baked cake, one's grandmother's *pastillas*, *puto* from one's hometown. Admittedly, one did not usually give a leg of ham, or a kilo of fish, or a bunch of carrots -- unless the gifted had a sense of humor, a generous imagination, and a sense of fantasy.

A good friend of mine expresses his love not only in food but in a total menu-performance. For a special loved one it was a special pasta recipe, for which he shipped to her hometown the makings of pasta and sauce; the wine, the aperitif, the salad and the dessert. And a poem written and declaimed for the occasion. On another

occasion it was thin-sliced beef and vegetables and chopsticks for *sukiyaki* -- cooked and served at the table the Japanese way. For still another day, Hainanese chicken rice with its sauces and soup; and smoked *tanguingue* with dill sauce and blueberry cheese-cake.

Yet food, for some, is itself the object of love, or better than love, as in Eric Chilman's poem, "A Gourmet's Love-Song":

Do I recall the night we met,
With both of our hearts en feu?
As if I ever could forget,
Dear Cordon Bleu!

A lover's moon was in the sky
We dined alone, we twain.
Sole Veronique was partnered by
A still Champagne.

You wore a bandeau on your hair,
And with the Coq au Vin
Produced a magnum old and rare
Of Chambertin.

Chateau d'Yquem, a last surprise
Was climax, crown and seal.
I might forget your lovely eyes,
But not that meal.

Not a bad menu at all: a fresh and delicate sole cooked with grapes, and accompanied by champagne. Chicken in red wine, with a rare Chambertin. Surely some cheese and fruits, a dessert, a liqueur -- towards a perfection and a luxury that may alas! overshadow the girl, her eyes, her devotion, and the message of love hidden in the meal.

Which suggests that perhaps a meal for lovers should not be too luxurious or too enticing, since it might eclipse the person and replace him or her as object of love. So how about a chilled white wine, a bit of cheese, and "thou"? Or *bibingka*, *salabat*, and *siya*?

My Personal, Communal Christmas

Each one's Christmas memories, I find, are necessarily personal: "We always had a Belen." "We had *noche buena* at my grandmother's." "We ate *bibingka* and drank *salabat* after *simbang gabi*." "My *ninong* always gave me money."

And yet they are necessarily communal, never solitary, always involving family and the larger community. For who sets up the crib at home? or the one at the church upon which the lighted star shines at midnight Mass? Who fill the stalls around the church on cold *Misa de Aguinaldo* mornings with *puto bumbong*, and other hot and fragrant goodies? Who decorate trees, wrap up presents, and deliver them? Who gather round communal tables to make Christmas mean what it does?

And then, I find, our Christmas memories are also syncretic, a fusion: including those heard of, or experienced by others close to us, and experienced by us vicariously or actually, which then grow with and into our own. We thus weave our Christmases from our contexts, enriching them with Christmases remembered, borrowed, sought out, savored.

The very first article I ever did on food, many years ago, was commissioned by Nita Umali Berthelsen for *The Philippines Quarterly*, and was on Christmas food. Everyone I asked had just such a personal/communal/fused memory, and I took them in against the background of my own memories.

I remember cold mornings in Manila, and walking to a dawn Mass with my Lola, Florentina G. Lucero, with whom I conversed in Spanish, because her Nueva Ecija Tagalog and my Negros Occidental Ilonggo could not yet meet. I do not remember eating anything after Mass then, but having heard how my Tagalog friends could hardly last through Mass because of the food stalls outside,

many years later I deliberately sought out the *puto bumbong* slowly sprouting purple in bamboo tubes, the *bibingka* turning golden brown in *kalan*-ovens as one hungrily waited, coals above and below, with little pools of moist golden *itlog na maalat* and white *kesong puti*, and the hot fragrant *salabat* -- but this was in Las Piñas, Parañaque, with friends.

Thrilling as well was the church music: violins and tambourines at Mass! and rhythms and melodies and singing that one never heard at Mass on ordinary days. I loved the plain Gregorian chant the nuns sang in my school, St. Scholastica's College, but this was a new excitement.

My Lola lived on Mayhaligue Street, in Sta. Cruz district, and it widened this Negros child's eyes to walk to church past houses close to each other, each of which had, glowing in the window, a star-shaped *parol* -- homemade in those days, of bamboo and *papel de Japon* and rice-paste -- lit by a glowing candle. Some years earlier, my mother had taught us to cut up colored tissue paper into triangles, then circles, then patterns that opened up to the lattice-work that decorated these humble reproductions of the Star of Bethlehem. My male classmates in Silay, Negros Occidental, would, in their Industrial Arts classes (while we fried bananas and made muffins in our Home Arts sections), fashion the whole star -- whittling away at the bamboo, pasting the thin, easily-torn paper on the frame, and putting in electric bulbs, to light the wayfarer's and the Christ Child's way to heart and home.

Many years later, as a wife with a house to decorate, I would reject the silver- and gold-decorated stars and sputniks hanging in rows near Buendia Avenue, choosing the simplest one, the one most like the stars I remembered from a Sta. Cruz street that has now become sadly dirty and dismal. And many more years later, when Negros was in economic doldrums, and someone dreamed up the Star of Hope, now of bamboo and pelon, collapsible and reusable, I bought several of them, still in nostalgia for those simple stars of yore.

The *Noche Buena*, the after-midnight repast, starts, in my memory, with *jamon China*: Hoc Shiu ham boiled in beer, baked and glazed with sugar *"na pina-plancha"* with a red-hot *siyanse*. How lovely it was to eat the pink, salty flesh with the white, sweet rim of fat. How difficult it was to decide whether to have all the flesh first, and save the sweet crust for last, or to weave between

salty and sweet, pink and white. But how perfect it was with *ensaimada* buttery, sugary and cheese-sprinkled, and thick hot chocolate. Or with a slice of my mother's *galantina* -- cold and firm, vari-textured and dotted with peas -- on the side.

And yet each person I have asked through the years seems to have had a different, yet equally precious *noche buena* memory. Sanirose Singson Orbeta, the famed nutritionist, and my best friend from college days, describes *tinubong* as marking Christmas for her. She grew up in Vigan, Ilocos Sur, where a half-cooked *puto* mixture would be poured into long bamboo tubes and left to cook on coals while the whole town went to midnight Mass. When they returned, the coals would be dying down, the bamboo would be charred, and the *tinubong* cooked just right. The long tubes would then be cut and distributed among the family. The lazy (to cook) could, she said, buy 10-, 20- and 50-centavo lengths (note the childhood prices) at stores, but there was nothing like eating that which one had prepared, and the sound that brings back Vigan midnights to Sanirose is the cracking of hot, charred bamboo tubes in hands eager to get at the food of Christmas.

For the late Enriqueta David Perez, mother of Fr. Bernardo (Bobby) Perez, OSB, and author of the steadiest, longest-running, and most helpful Philippine cookbook I know *(Recipes of the Philippines), noche buena* had to be *cocido,* because that was what her family had: an old-fashioned recipe with *chorizo de Bilbao, morcilla, jamon China,* and beef *kenchi* with marrow bone, chicken, pork, cabbage, *pechay,* carrots, potatoes, onion, tomato sauce, and a thick broth -- served of course with eggplant sauce.

"Relleno!" exclaimed the late Leny Guerrero Joven, in whose home kitchen and restaurant I received a lot of my early education in gastronomy and cookery. She had a French mother who, in the setting of the gourmandising Guerrero family, would prepare *relleno* and *galantina* -- large fat capons stuffed with an assortment of riches, including, in the old days, *foie gras,* truffles, ground pork, olives, Oxford sausages, Spanish sausages, etc. Years later I would order from Leny's restaurant, La Costa Brava, her Christmas relleno and galantina, in order to taste her Guerrero-Ermita Christmas.

"Lechon," my late father, Aguinaldo S. Gamboa, said, was the *media noche* of his childhood -- lechon the Negros way, fragrant with *tanglad* that sent out enticing fumes the moment a knife was stuck into the crisp brown skin. Many years later, I found my

Christmas role in my mother's Christmas eve lunches: carving the lechon. First the skin in squares for everybody, especially those with drinks in their hands. Then the lean and fat -- not much of the latter on the small *lechon de leche* -- on plates, to serve on the table. And then a few of us would sit around the carcass and claim our reward: pulling off the ribs with their tender, clinging flesh. Since they were nearest the *tanglad* stuffing, they were the most fragrant, the sweetest.

We had no *Panunuluyan* in Negros or in Sta. Cruz, and so when Nic Tiongson invited us to witness one in Malolos, Bulacan (I was into research in folk drama by then), I jumped at the chance. We gathered in the dark church courtyard at about 10 in the evening, and joined the gaggle of children led by the priest, the sacristans carrying cross and candles, the choir and the band. And of course the "stars" of the show: the statues of St. Joseph and Mary on the same *carrosa,* he with a straw hat and carrying a traveller's bundle; she pillow-pregnant.

The band struck up, to my surprise, a song that I had learned as a child: "Glow-worm" ("Shine, little glow-worm, glimmer, glimmer . . ."), which didn't have anything to do with Christmas, but now does to me. We stopped at the first house, and sang with the choir members playing Mary and Joseph: "O ginoo pong maybahay, mag dalita kami'y dungawin; ampunin at kahabagan sa mahal mo pong tahanan . . ." The tune, by Nic's uncle Ignacio Wytangcoy, was easy to learn, and the words we read over the shoulders of the choir.

The choir members were already up on the balcony singing the lines of the Maybahay: "Kung dine sana'y may lugar / gaano ang kayo'y tulutan / di ba ninyo namamasdan / ako'y walang kalagian." Four houses we went to, all with *belen* out front, all with balconies from which the owners could refuse the *nanunuluyan,* and all giving us "caridad" of apples, *pastilyas de leche* or *de pili* (this was, after all, sweet-prone Malolos). After all the rejections ("Kayo'y hindi masisiksik / at dine ay masikip"; "Kayo man po'y patuluyin / ay mangagsisialis din / sapagkat lubhang masinsin / mga tao kung darating"), all of us ended in the church in time for midnight mass, where the Child was born in the manger at the high altar, to which a lighted star descended (on a pulley).

Years later, we were to stage *Panunuluyan* of our own at the Ateneo. The first one was done by Communication students

as a thesis, and had Mary and Joseph rejected by students, faculty, a *sosyal* crowd at the Peninsula (I played an extra), and the Ateneo security guard -- only to be welcomed by a janitor and led to the college chapel. The latest had an all-faculty cast, Pinoy angels (in *tubao, katsa,* etc.), *maybahay* who were urban poor, academics, etc., and Joseph and Mary singing original words and music by Jesuit musicians. And so although the *Panunuluyan* was never in my childhood experience, it is now indelibly part of my Christmas.

After that first Malolos *Panunuluyan,* we skipped midnight mass and drove to San Fernando to see the famous giant lanterns. Oh what a crush, what a glory! The churchyard was crammed with people, including food vendors whose stock was almost gone, since they had been feeding the populace all evening. But there I finally tasted what Etang David Perez had told me about: *putong lusong* eaten with *panara.* The white, anise-flavored cake was cut in thick trapezoidal wedges; the little pasties called *panara* were of dough (*galapong, anisado* wine, *achuete*) filled with grated *upo* sautéed with garlic, onion, pork and shrimp, and seasoned with salt and plenty of black pepper, then fried hot. I did as Etang had said: sandwich the hot panara between two pieces of puto -- and taste the San Fernando Christmas.

But the eyes feasted as well: on the kaleidoscopes of color whirling in the lanterns, each mounted on a truck, the bed of which was filled by a generator and the "computer" that programmed its colors, whirling, melding, fading, growing brilliant, and lighting up the eyes of children young and old. Each lantern was a barrio's pride; a community had made it, its members had spent on, programmed, labored over it. They were far removed from my first *paroles,* humbly paper-and-bamboo, lit only by solitary candles.

But the one-candle-power lantern, and the multi-kilowatt bright San Fernando spectacle, were one in spirit. Both are now part of my Christmas memories, as are the Malolos and Ateneo *Panunuluyan,* and my fusion of Papa's lechon, Mama's *galantina,* Leny's *relleno,* Etang's *cocido,* the apples and oranges Lola would give her grandchildren, the walnuts and chestnuts Wili remembers from *his* childhood, and the *bibingka* and *salabat, puto bungbong* and *kutsinta* that I have encountered in various churchyards of Christmases past and present.

No wonder Christmas is so unforgettable. We all, it seems, borrow from and contribute to each other's Christmas -- personal and communal, and the fusion enters the collective unconscious, to become the Pinoy Christmas, the longest and richest in the world.

Noche Buena

The *Noche Buena*, night of goodness, is to the Filipino not really just Christmas eve, to which the term refers, but also and specifically the meal shared by the family after the midnight mass. It is also called *media noche* -- another transposition of the name for a time into the name for a meal -- because, says my mother Dr. Alicia Lucero Gamboa, no one was allowed to eat till after midnight mass; one fasted, especially from meat, for the feast early on Christmas morning. It is not usually shared with guests, only with family, and usually only with the nuclear family, the very closest and dearest. It is for many Filipino families, therefore, the most meaningful meal of the year.

It certainly is high on the consciousness of many. "What is your Christmas meal?" the PAL man at the Cebu airport counter asked me as I breathlessly handed him my ticket (it was almost counter-closing time). "I want to tell my wife about it." It was still a month to Christmas, and already he was thinking of the feast and the *media noche*, and the preparations for it.

"Baked, sugared ham," I would have answered him, if I hadn't been so busy checking in luggage and receiving ticket and boarding card. "The *jamon China* or *jamon en funda* (it came in cloth sacks) which had been cooked in beer, baked with cloves, and glazed with sugar. And my mother's *galantina*, which she steamed in cheese cloth wrappings, and was good hot or cold. And . . ." but I am no longer sure which *noche buena* I am referring to -- those with Papa and Mama as a child, or those with Lola Florentina at Lucero family reunions in Manila, or those I have gathered from other people's customs and made my own.

Lechon was what my father, the late Aguinaldo S. Gamboa, remembered as noche buena fare in Silay, Negros Occidental, as he

grew up: *lechon* the Negros way, fragrant with *tanglad* stuffing. To this my aunt Meling Gamboa now adds *pancit Molo, hamon,* and *lukon,* the prawns presently stellar in the Negros economy, which because of their size and luxury have always been special.

"*Morcon!*" declares Mario Severino Torres, also of Silay, who runs the well-known SIR carinderia where many get their party fare. They would often have *releyenong bangus,* sometimes even roast turkey, but always, Mama and Lola before her, would prepare *morcon,* plus the obligatory *castañas, hamon,* and *queso de bola.*

"*Suman,*" asserts Fely G. Onque, now a teacher at Toledo (Cebu) National Vocational High School, but born in Tagbilaran, Bohol. Suman to eat at midnight with thick hot *tsukwate* (chocolate), and suman as well to give away. The family with some money would splurge on a whole leg of homemade ham, but rich or poor, everyone had *suman.*

"Yes, *suman* definitely," adds Elisa San Juan, mayor of Toledo City, Cebu, and wife to Dr. Teodulo San Juan, medical director of the Atlas Mining Corporation. "Many kinds of *suman,* sometimes." But because she is originally from Guagua, Pampanga, she also has *relleno,* a fat chicken *relleno,* and often the *panara* which Pampangos eat with *putong lusong* in the churchyard of San Fernando after midnight mass -- as they watch the giant whirling kaleidoscopic lanterns for which the town is uniquely famous.

Cocido was her family Christmas centerpiece, the late Enriqueta David Perez told me many years ago, when I interviewed her for the first piece on Christmas food which I ever wrote. It was the old-fashioned recipe with meats (beef *kenchi,* marrow bones, chicken, pork), sausages (*chorizo de Bilbao, morcilla* or blood sausage), ham, vegetables (cabbage, pechay, carrots, potatoes, onions), tomato sauce, and a thick broth -- served of course with the contrast and complement of an eggplant sauce.

Roast chicken is what Nenett Manzo remembers. Formerly of Silay, Negros Occidental, but now of Cebu City, where she teaches at the Florencio Urot Memorial High School, she says it was chicken not stuffed, just roasted. *Inasal,* says Jocelyn Pineda of La Castellana, Negros Occ., or "whatever Nanay cooked," usually *butong,* of *pilit* (*malagkit* rice) and *butong (buko),* and a spit-roasted chicken. Yes, chicken, confirms Tessie Ramos of Albay -- cooked *sa gata,* special because they so seldom had it, and after the holidays returned to having fish and vegetables.

Jose Dorado of Panit-an, Capiz, remembers roast chicken as well, as noche buena basic. It was readily available, yet it was special. When he and his late wife Carol had a family, however, she always prepared a special chicken macaroni salad, which she would also put in jars and give away to friends and relatives at Christmas. Mr. Dorado would prepare the Ilongo *suman sa ibus*, which is wrapped in young coconut fronds, or in fragrant *payaw* leaf (called *agik-ik* in both Waray and Manobo). Now that the Dorado family has settled, and the children have grown up in Tacloban City, it is still their mother's chicken macaroni salad that makes Christmas -- the constant, to which they add roasted chicken, or ham, or other current fancies like chocolate or fruit cake.

Suman too, is what their cook Mana Inday Bagason prepares for her own family. Seldom can they afford the chocolate as well, but the *suman* is special, prepared with two tastes -- salty and sweet, and wrapped to indicate the distinction.

"*Arroz caldo,*" says Conrad Calalang, restaurateur now, but native son of Bulacan first. "In Malolos, you always start with *arroz caldo.* It is yellow with the *kasubha* and with the fat of the chicken, and it has lots of *dahong sili* in it, but its flavor comes from the ginger-*patis* combination, cooked *sangkutsa.*" With it must go, he says, the Malolos *puto* with *sangke* (star anise). And in his family, his mother usually served as well a Smithfield Ham (yes, the salty ham from the U.S.), although there might also be Hoc Shiu (*jamon China*).

Different, is what Nancy Reyes calls their family media noche, because it is not limited to the family circle. Six Reyes families usually spend it with the nuns of Vigil House in New Manila, who have been beneficiaries of their giving during the year, and reciprocate at the Christmas midnight dinner. The food is always *pospas, puto*, ham, *queso de bola*, and chocolate, and the nuns then raffle off gifts for the some-40 Reyeses present.

Rubing, 55, a driver in Negros, is a bachelor, but says that of course he has noche buena, even if it is by himself: *pansit* which he buys, and *ilimnon*, drinks.

Fe Redito Rebueno, of Oas, Albay, says that in their family it was not the custom to eat after the mass, but to wait till Christmas morning for a big feast of *embutido, paella, lechon*, fried chicken, *leche flan*, fruit salad, and *ibus.* She believes that only the elite 20 or 30% in Albay have a midnight meal. She herself feels that the helpers

should not be clearing up a meal after midnight, but preparing to go to mass themselves, and so she has made a family tradition of celebrating on Christmas Day. Noche buena/media noche is certainly, however, a cherished custom with many. Children remember the savors, and the thrill of eating after midnight. Parents recall the labor and the joy of preparing, planning, budgeting, and setting or carrying on family traditions.

Since Christmas as feast came to us with Christianization and through the Spaniards, many of the food components are Spanish: *jamon, relleno, galantina, chocolate, ensaimada*, even the apples, oranges, grapes, *turrones*, and *castañas.* So vital are these to the Filipino Christmas that they are sought even in hard times, when anything imported is beyond most budgets. They are symbols of the holiday, and have been entrenched in custom and memory.

Christmas, however, is also a feast built on an older celebration -- harvest, probably. It is therefore syncretic, acquiring meaning and symbols from pre-Christian observances. Thus a constant that runs through many of these feasts is rice --whole or ground, sticky or otherwise, often sweetened -- in the forms of *suman, ibus, bibingka, puto bumbong, puto maya*, etc., or even *arroz caldo* and *pospas.* Rice figures in our pre-Christian rituals -- offerings to the gods, marriage ceremonies, fertility rites. It is so basic to our food life that it is appropriately symbol as well as staff of life. And so it now figures in this most Christian of feasts, and we give thanks, we celebrate, we offer each other rice on the important days of our year's passage. The poor may have just the *suman* or *ibus*, or, when they can, a chicken to add to it. The rich may concentrate on foods from the Spanish Christmas, as well as from the American (roast turkey, fruit cakes), but they too, retain the rice.

Noche buena, night of goodness, is thus not only hallowed by the birth of Christ, by Christian tradition and family customs, but by life forces earlier than anyone remembers, by stirrings of the Filipino ethos. It is indeed, for rich and poor, a meal meaningful beyond memory.

The Festive Table

It is fiesta morning. Before dawn, even before the church bells ring out the Saint's Mass, the band strikes up a brassy march, warming the night air and waking the populace. The cooks have been up much earlier, stoking kitchen and backyard fires. The *lechon*, a suckling or full-grown pig, is turning on its bamboo spit. Stuffed capons are roasting, soup bubbling, rice cakes baking. Embroidered tablecloths are being pressed and spread. The entire house -- from front door, now open as wide as welcoming arms, to the yard swept clean of every dry leaf -- is ready to celebrate the rituals of this special day.

The Philippine fiesta means many things. A celebration of the Saint's feastday. Thanksgiving for the Lord's and the land's bounty. A testimonial to labor and its fruits. An affirmation of human bonds. A toast to the good life.

It is a universal Philippine feast, the spirit prevailing in rural barrio or upscale Manila suburb. The difference between one and the other is marked only by the trappings of the feast: the richness of the board, the folks' manner of dress, the range of hospitality, the special features of place, time and custom. Although worlds apart, both communities are caught in the fiesta spell, neither less spiritedly than the other.

Centerpiece of the fiesta is the festive table. Whether it be an heirloom or something a Sunday carpenter put together, it is proud testament to the host's goodwill. Set in the most conspicuous part of the house, it is dressed with the family's best linen, adorned with silver and flowers, and laden edge to edge with delicacies of the field and sea, market and grocery. It is both cornucopia of bounty and sacrificial altar, the last harking back to the Filipino ancients' practice of offering to nature spirits the best of their own

gifts, in the hope that plenty would bring plenty, generosity beget generosity.

In place of honor is the *lechon*, stuffed with fragrant tamarind leaves or lemon grass, and spit-roasted a golden brown, its skin crisp and crackling, its ears and tail emblems of delight awarded to special guests. So important is it in the Filipino feast that in Balayan, a coastal town in Batangas Province, a festival is held in its honor. The *lechon*, festooned with leaves and flowers, is first paraded around town before meeting its destiny on the laden table.

Radiating from the *lechon* are choice dishes: beef rolls called *morcon;* chicken and turkey luxuriously stuffed; sausages and ham; proud fishes dressed in mayonnaise and a rainbow of vegetable and egg garnishes; steamed crabs, prawns, and lobsters; noodles fat, thin, transparent and thick. Filling in every empty space are crystal dishes of relishes, dipping sauces and pickles in translucent strands, or cut out like flowers and stars.

Desserts are on a separate sidetable, a testament to the national sweet tooth. Fruits freshly picked, or last season's harvest carved in floral shapes and preserved in syrup. From the native tradition, rice cakes and puddings sprinkled or glazed with coconut, and the milk candy called *pastillas*, wrapped in thin paper with intricately hand-cut tails. Chinese sweetmeats, American pies and cakes, and a slew of Spanish sweets.

Part of the festiveness is working together in preparation, which is in fact pre-celebration, and begins days ahead. Pigs, goats and cows are fattened, native corn-fed pullets cooped up to encourage fat and prevent muscle, rice ground in stone mills.

The women of San Miguel de Mayumo (literally Saint Michael of Sweetness) in Bulacan Province cut out with small sharp scissors -- formerly without a guide except for folk memory and skill -- the hearts, flowers, stars, leaves and words like "Remembrance" and "Mabuhay" (long life) that decorate *pastillas* wrappers. In Pakil, Laguna Province, bakers mold cookies in the image of the Virgin of Turumba, the town's patron. In the towns of Sariaya and Lucban in Quezon Province, edible folk art comes in the form of brilliant wafer-leaves called *kiping*.

The best cooks from the farm or among one's relatives come unbidden, bearing their favorite knives, and all the skill and devotion of the living generations of one's clan. Grandmothers and master cooks direct the kitchen; mothers, aunts and household help

hang curtains, even as they cook up their individual specialties. Daughters and nieces polish the silver, wash the crystal and china, arrange flowers.

On *visperas*, the eve of the feast, the colored bunting -- hand-made and hung by the young -- already flutters in the streets. The church has been cleaned from belfry to patio, the altar filled with flowers, the crowns and haloes of images burnished bright, the wheeled palanquins for the procession decked with lights.

On the day of the fiesta, every home is an open house. The host, who had earlier called on the mayor and parish priest, family elders and business associates, goes into the street to call friends, and friends of friends, welcoming all, even the stranger.

He leads the guests, in protocol as strict as that of a state dinner, to seats of honor: the men of the cloth, government officials, town professionals, members of the clan, and so on, in a hierarchy of regard and intimacy. He presides at the head of the never-emptied, all-day table to which guests come in waves, not sitting until the host has beckoned twice, thrice, and pressed them to gather around, sip the *vino tinto*, start on the soup, and eat, eat, eat.

Everyone shares in both the bounty and the spirit. As the close or favored guest leaves, he is given *pabaon*, a food package to take home, something that extends the hospitality to his family, to the next day, to memory.

By then the festive table is in disarray, a good sign. It has done its part: as a symbol of the Filipino's regard for family and friend, church and town; as pledge of his fealty to community, given in the language of eating and sharing, feasting and giving.

Angono, San Clemente, Giants and Water Pistols

The call came from Digon Vocalan: come and judge the contest (P2,500 top prize) of *higantes* being made by the barangays, whose artists and craftsmen had gone through a workshop together. So there we were in Angono on November 23 at 7:30 in the morning to have a fiesta-morning breakfast at Balaw-Balaw. Beside a papier-mache carabao head prefiguring the higantes-to-come, sat vari-sized *palayok* bearing: *arroz caldo* in which to drop chicken wings and legs and tails, crisp-fried garlic, and spring onion rings; *baboy* (boiled then fried brown) and *tokwa* to combine with the sauce and shallots into *tokwa't baboy*; *menudo* to eat with or fill up *pan de sal*; chocolate on which to sprinkle *pinipig*, and an authentic vendor's can, from which to scoop up shimmying *taho*.

The criteria drawn up by Digon and his group included: a theme tied to Angono history and tradition; originality brought to bear on native craftmanship; barangay participation; and presentation (dancing, marching, etc.). Minus points were suggested for those who used *alak* and drunkenness as part of their participation. Armed with these, off we went in tricycles to plunge into the festooned streets teeming with jubilant people and patient vendors. There was a separate contest for *indramada* (P1,500 top prize), the Angono term for street decorations (arches, bunting), which Ino Manalo (CCP Museum Director then, living in Angono to research his dissertation on the fiesta in context of the town's life) tells me is probably derived from the Mexican *enramada*, meaning branching decorations or bowers. In Angono these were decorated with tinsel, bunting, car parts, found objects, flowers, etc., depending on individual invention and whim.

The *higantes* were lined up in the jampacked church courtyard, and Claude Tayag (there to photograph and document as well as to judge) and I were excitedly taking pictures, when a resident quietly told me: "Misa muna," for the Mass was going on in the even-more-jampacked church. After the people had streamed out, the *patron*, San Clemente, emerged borne on his people's shoulders, accompanied by San Isidro ("ka-barkada niya") and the Blessed Virgin.

The procession was led by the old, original higantes -- a bald and bearded man and a woman, vaguely European-looking. Each of the nine barangay contingents started with higantes -- mostly pairs, including a rosary-bearing friar, a blonde woman, a Chinese -- marching, dancing, swaying, stooping to greet or tease the children. The rattan frame is held up by a man inside (rubber shoes showing below the dress) who peeks through a slit in the costume. These were followed by the barangay contingent of women -- little girls, teenagers, matrons, old women, or a combination -- in identical dresses, headgear (e.g. flour-sack costumes; pink/white stripes/dots with head scarfs; yellow/white with hats) and *bakya*, oars (painted with barangay name, or saint's name, or the Filipino flag) held to shoulders, and marching in the uniform dance-rhythm: *padjak*, step; *padjak*, step. Rehearsals had been held daily in the last days, through traffic-cleared streets. No one ever seemed to tire or to fall out of step, even though this did not necessarily jive with the rhythm of the marching band which followed.

The bands came from as far as Pakil, but the best of course was the Angono band, playing "their songs."

Also with the contingent were barangay folk -- many drunk, mostly wet, all shooting merrily at each other and streetside *kabalayan* with water pistols, as though saying: We're all going into the lake, right? So let's get all wet now! One merry band of boys was led by a smiling, fairly tipsy oldish man who, every time the parade stopped, did graceful solo dances on the street to the cheers of his group. A portly middle-aged lady used her oar to paddle the young boys straying into the parade space, or the young girl-marchers when out of line or out of step. A young man peeked inside the higante costume through the viewing-slit in front, and in response the giant spewed out a stack of cardboard.

San Clemente, though surely used to Angono weather, was protected from the sun by an umbrella. Barangay San Vicente must

be the source of the town's famous *fried itik*, because its lady higante had duck eggs for earrings, and a nesting duck on her head, while boys preceding her held ducklings in their hands. Barangay San Pedro had a rooster-head preceded by two terno-clad young ladies who danced the *salubong* -- thus tying up celebrations with each other, the liturgical calendar, and the town cycle, as Ino pointed out. Barangay Kalayaan had an *arbularyo* among its giants, and platoons of old ladies in red and yellow, or flowered print *balintawak*, going *padjak*-step in sprightly unison.

"It still has spontaneity!" exclaimed Claude, "unlike tourism-made fiestas." The marching, the shouting, the water-pistol shooting, the active watching -- all came from an inner spirit of belonging to the town and contributing to the celebration. I accidentally stepped on a man's foot, exclaimed, "Oh, I'm sorry!", and was answered, "OK lang, fiesta naman ito!" After the parade had passed on its way to the lake, I got into a tricycle, and the driver didn't want to specify a charge. "Bahala na po kayo." He also did not mind the wait -- a policeman stopped us near the highway to let the tail of the parade through; and a self-appointed boy traffic supervisor told him: "Patayin muna ang makina," and he did. Along the way, he also stopped to shoot his water pistol at his friends, and to shout instructions to others about the traffic. He also blazed through the mud and the people like a happy drag racer.

While friends raced off to the lake and the pagoda (and reported that Ino had emerged from the water mud-splattered and *malangsa*), I had to return to Balaw-Balaw and thence to Manila for appointments, leaving other judges writing out their votes, and Luz and Digon preparing lunch for guests (*kanduli, alimango, itlog na pula, halabos na hipon, inihaw na baboy, tinadtad na mangga't bagoong, tahong, burong dalag, hito, haleang ube*, etc.), and wishing I could stay to fiesta all day.

I had put the higantes of Barangay San Roque on the top of my win-list. The latter turned out to be Digon's own barangay, but he said that no matter who won, they all won, because the designing and making of the higantes had been a community enterprise. And that, I guess, says it for Angono and its spirit.

The town fiesta is not only the yearly letting-off-steam, throwing-the-house-out-the-window event that makes the struggle to survive bearable. It is also and especially a distillation of

ethos, a reaffirmation of *pakikisama* and *pakikipagkapwa tao;* a confirmation of community. We can update it, change it, spend more or less for it, add more higantes and water pistols, but we cannot dampen it (except literally), and do thank God for the Pinoy spirit that makes the fiesta, even in parlous times, a celebration of Philippine life.

Silay, Zarzuelas, and Remembering the Revolution

November 13, the feast of San Diego de Alcala (St. Didacus) is the town fiesta of Silay City, Negros Occidental. Balik-Silay Festival '89 was the title of an updated fiesta that pulled the whole town as well as Silaynons from Manila and other places into the whirl of activities. A letter from Executive Committee chairman Alan Gaston (former golfer, former actor, that year's man-in-the-center) invited out-of-town Silaynon to come home and celebrate, which we did.

Mayor Ramon Jison and his dynamic wife Maida were in the center of the whirl as well, involving local government officials, barangay chairmen, leaders of various sectors, and friends, in the organization of the nine days of fun and togetherness. November 5 it started, with the Planters', Millers' and Farm Workers' Day, and the theme "Together for a Better Tomorrow." At 9:00 a.m. was enacted the "Cry of Freedom" in front of the City Hall.

The revolution in Negros against Spain, you see, started in Silay City on November 5, *Cinco de Noviembre*, after which a street is named. Plans had been laid long before by the Silay Revolutionary Committee, meeting in the pharmacy of Leandro Rama Locsin (grandfather of National Artist Lindy Locsin), in whose prescription book were listed contributions by individuals, in the guise of pharmaceutical materials (e.g. Jose Ledesma, 500 grs. Jarabe de limon, meaning that he had given 500 pesos). From Silay and its conquest, on that day, General Aniceto Lacson led his troops to Talisay and then to the capital, Bacolod, where negotiations had been going on between the Spaniards and the revolutionists. When through a telescope the Governor and his officials saw "a thick formation of men heavily armed with rifles and glistening bayonets

and pulling some cannons," the terms of capitulation were soon drawn up and signed.

At dusk, the rebel forces entered Bacolod "marching to the music of a band which General Lacson had brought all the way from Talisay." Only then did the crowd and the Spaniards find out that the heavy armament that had alarmed the Spaniards consisted of clever *paltics*, uniformly cut nipa stalks tipped with shiny knives (quite probably the *ispading* used for cane-cutting), and rolled *sawali* mats painted black to simulate cannons.

The first Filipino flag raised in Negros was hoisted in Silay. Pura Villanueva Kalaw (mother of Maria Kalaw Katigbak and Purita Kalaw Ledesma) wrote (as quoted in Maria Kalaw Katigbak's *Legacy)* that she remembers her mother, Emilia Garcia Villanueva of Palencia, Spain, sending her to buy material for a flag to be sewn according to a picture that had been entrusted to Emilia for the Visayans by Filipino revolutionary officers she had known in Spain. "My mother made the first Filipino flag that was ever raised in the Visayan Islands," she wrote. Fr. Angel Martinez Cuesta, OSA, on the other hand, quoting a 1919 source, says in his *History of Negros*: "A Filipino flag embroidered by Olympia Severino and her sisters had been hoisted in town." Could they all have sewn this flag together?

Olympia Severino was my grandmother, and so it was with pride that I joined the other descendants of *Cinco de Noviembre* participants in celebrating that year's fiesta with a historical reenactment. Each day thereafter was devoted to a sector: the barangays, the youth, the market vendors, the homeowners' associations, the city government employees, DECS/PTA, teachers and stueents, etc. There were demonstrations of herbal medicines, fruit/vegetables preserves, handicrafts, cooking, etc. At a lecture for Silay Institute faculty, I was shown an ingenious gadget improvised by the oven-less home economics department: a *karahay* filled with clean washed sand, to be heated over a *kalan*, then used to cook macaroons.

There were *palo sebo*, hog chase, sack race, coconut-peeling, onion eating contests; *Tricicad* (leg-powered) and marathon races, mass dances and songs. Also a fashion show (evolution of Filipino costumes), a parade of *Wala paglubad* (unfading) beauties 50 years old and above; a search for the *Lin-ay* (beauty) *sang Silay 89*. And of course dances nightly at the plaza, princesses and queens

galore (the market vendors' princesses represented the meat, vegetable, snack, dry goods, etc. sections), and masses daily at the parish church.

Although I went home to be home, to celebrate history, to enjoy friends and relatives, to feast, my assignment was to act as judge for the zarzuela contest, started five years earlier by Silay's Art Foundation. As a judge some years back, I had been astounded at the growth in theatre craft and style (thanks in part to outreach seminars conducted by the Cultural Center of the Philippines), and the continuing creativity of Silay folk. Decades earlier, Silay had a Kahirup Theatre to which Italian opera and Spanish drama troupes came, earning the town the title of "Paris of Negros," and giving our parents and grandparents a theatre exposure and experience that still seems to hover over the town and its people.

Would you believe fourteen barangays, each creating a zarzuela (script, music, dances, direction, staging) according to definite rules? The theme had to come from Senator Shahani's Moral Recovery Program (Building a People; Building a Nation), could take any approach (history, comedy, drama, etc.), had to use original songs but was allowed one adaptation or borrowing, and had to last not more than an hour and ten minutes, including the setting up and striking of sets. All thus had themes drawn from community experience (problems with land-owners, drugs, poverty, the insurgency; concerns within the sugar industry, agriculture, fishing; personal relationships set in social contexts, etc.), expressed in eloquent language, and expressive of the obvious community bonding that caused and was caused by the zarzuelas.

The winning zarzuela, "Isa ka Dugo; Isa ka Ambahanon" (one blood, one song), written by two seminarians in flowing, glowing, Ilonggo, was a wish for a brotherhood that could end conflicts and violence -- between Muslim and Christian, between rebel and non-rebel. No triteness, no cliches, but authentic eloquence. It was visually spectacular, because barangay 2 sought advice and borrowed costumes from the Bacolod Muslim community -- who came to watch and cheer. In the excellent chorus were former drug addicts rounded up by the city's outreach program and trained in theatre.

Watching three zarzuelas every night, I didn't get to walk around or sample the public meals in the plaza. But around and after the zarzuelas, we were always being feted: with *diwal*, the

lovely angel-wing shellfish that was in seasonal, pristine sweetness; beautiful fat crabs; the carabao milk *dulce gatas* of Silay, caramel-colored and chewy; the little brown, sesame-flecked *butong-butong (tira-tira)*; fish and prawns just hours away from fishponds, etc.

Monino Duque of the CCP, Lu Decenteceo of Silliman, and I also accompanied our hosts to market in Bacolod, and found ingenuity in: *balimbing* as stoppers for vinegar bottles (easy to put on and take off; keeps out flies), and neat packaging for *tingi* (super-retail) buying: single cloves of garlic; oil, vinegar, and soy sauce for a day's cooking, etc. We found large mushrooms (not cultured, but growing fresh daily, from July to December), large and small rays *(pagi)*, and *kadyos* (black-eyed peas) galore.

On the last day, the fiesta closed with a concelebrated mass, a parade of all sectors, and the coronation of a queen and princesses. An overloaded transformer caused a power outage for an hour, through which all waited. There was relief expressed at the resurgence of Negros: no more hungry children, an improved economy (sugar up then, but prawns down), a growing craft scene (started in the black days of the sugar industry crisis), a hopeful local government, participation by all sectors in the economy and in the fiesta, many balik-Silaynon wishing to come back next year.

After the queen was crowned and waltzed, dancing went on even as people drifted out, and an uncle scolded us for going home at 3 a.m. "Don't you know that Silaynons always stay to watch the sun rise?"

A Town Bejewelled: Philippine Food Art

The impulse to beauty, the urge to express the artistic spirit, has led men and women, tribes and peoples, groups and individual artists, to decorate not only canvases and walls, monuments and *objets d'art*, but also such everyday objects as the beams of houses, the prows of boats, tool handles, cooking pots, sleeping mats, oars, ladles, market baskets, coconut graters, and food. Whence comes the impulse to decorate food, since artistic elaboration is not necessary to its nature or use?

In the Philippines, artistic expression in food does not mean garnishing with vegetables or fruits, or building architectural banquet pieces, but enhancing the food itself, or the packaging in which it is presented. This is not done for the sake of nutrition, or of taste, or even of marketability, and is obviously premised on the idea that the utilitarian need not be plain, that what appeals to the palate may also give pleasure to the eye, that the ephemeral, like the wrapping to be discarded, has its moment worth enhancing.

It may well be that many food objects that used to be decorated are no longer so treated, but a number still exist, and bear noticing.

PICKLES. *Achara* is a pickle or relish made of grated unripe papaya and vegetables -- red and green bell peppers, purplish shallots, carrots, cucumber and *singkamas* (yam bean) -- all preserved in and flavored with coconut vinegar, salt and spices. It is a prime medium for this art, because the soft-but-firm textures lend themselves to carving into flowers, stars, leaves, words, and even figures of men and women, nipa huts and carabaos.

The colors and textures offer a varied palette, and so the *achara* is arranged in glass jars not only in patterns of color and shape, but

even into story vignettes -- a farmer with a guitar, walking under a tree; a girl dancing on bamboo poles; an arrangement of flowers; or words like *ala-ala* or *recuerdo* (remembrance), or the name of the recipient of the gift bottle. Mono-color pickles, like *singkamas* or *ubod* (heart of palm) are also carved or at least pleasingly arranged, or given color accents, but it is the papaya/vegetable palette that is most often given visual, even narrative, embellishment.

COOKIES. Special cookies, like the *Pan de San Nicolas* (bread of St. Nicholas) of Pampanga, are made of dough (arrowroot and coconut milk) pressed into carved wooden molds then finished with metal cutters, thus acquiring in relief the image of St. Nicholas within a floral pattern and border. In Arayat, Pampanga, this used to be "distributed after Mass to the parishioners during the traditional feast of St. Nicholas" (1) on December 6. It is now somewhat rare, and Mrs. Rosalinda Lacson of San Fernando, Pampanga, who still bakes them, no longer connects with the tradition. Her mold, she says, was given to her father by a friend from Amsterdam, and she labels the cookies she supplies a Manila bakery "St. Nichol's Bite."

In the town of Pakil, Laguna province, the patron saint, Our Lady of Sorrows, is known as the Virgin of Turumba, because of the procession in her honor in which the participants (including those who seek healing) "dance" and chant:

Turumba! Turumba!	Turumba! Turumba!
Marianga	Marianga
Matuwa tayo't magkanta,	Let us be joyous, and sing
Sumayaw nang Turumba	Dance the Turumba
Puri sa Virgen Maria.	In praise of the Virgin Mary.

There are cookies representing the Virgin of Turumba, available only during her feasts. These are not shaped on molds. "Instead a cardboard outline of the Virgin is placed on top of the dough, then the figure is added with a series of punchers."(2) Thus they are lattice-work cookies shaped like the image of the Virgin, complete with crown and the rays Tagalogs call *potensiya* (potency, or power.)

FOOD WRAPPERS. The packaging of food is an occasion for artistic expression. In the Philippines cakes of glutinous rice (variously called *suman, ibus, tupig, tamales*, etc.) are wrapped in coconut fronds, banana leaves, nipa leaves, or corn husks, giving play to another kind of creativity. Pale young coconut fronds or unopened nipa leaves are wound around *suman sa ibus* in most towns; in Bulacan they are woven into little triangular baskets. Breakfast *putomaya* is spooned into banana-leaf twists in the market of Bantayan, Cebu. The Meycauayan, Bulacan *tamales* are not flat like those of Pampanga, but trapezoidal (and sweet). The Ilocano Christmas *tinubong* is poured into bamboo tubes, which are then thrown on the fire to bake through the Midnight Mass.

No packaging, however, is as transient and as devotedly artistic as the *pastillas* wrappers of San Miguel de Mayumo, Bulacan. The *pastillas de leche* (candies of carabao milk and sugar) of San Miguel are famous, not only for their sweet fineness, but also for their fiesta wrappers. Ordinarily they are loosely wrapped in plain white paper, but for fiestas, the wrappers are of multi-colored tissue paper *(papel de japon)* cut into designs of stars, leaves, flowers -- roses, *cadena de amor, sampaguita* -- palm leaves and branches, and letters (*Filipinas, Ala-ala, Recuerdo, Maligayang Pasko* [Merry Christmas], *Maligayang Kaarawan* [Happy Birthday], etc.).

The women of San Miguel cut the folded paper with embroidery scissors -- formerly free-hand, now with patterns traced in pencil. The *pastillas*, barely more than an inch long, are wrapped in the plain part of the paper, and the patterned "tails" float down from the footed glass dishes in which they are usually displayed on fiesta tables. This fragile art is truly evanescent, since unwrapping *pastillas* usually means tearing the design, and eating it means throwing away the art that comes from the labor of many moments. (3)

FRUITS. Also in San Miguel, fruits preserved in syrup are another area of food art. *Mayumo* is the Pampango word for "sweet," and thus the name of the town translates literally to "St. Michael of Sweetness," and proclaims the town's specialty: sweets of many kinds. Only in this town are fruits carved -- *bordado* (embroidered), the townfolk call it -- with floral patterns.

Pomelo *(suha)*, tiny limes *(dayap)*, *santol (Sandoricum koetjape)*, breadfruit *(rimas)*, jackfruit *(langka)*, star fruit *(balimbing)*, wax gourd *(kundol)*, native oranges, and soursop *(guyabano)* are preserved in a light syrup in glass jars. But seldom are they put in plain. They

are carved with flowers, leaves, rosettes, whorls, patterns. They are bottled with these designs facing outwards, such that a shelf of these jars, the fruits translucent in the pale syrup, the light shining through their lucent fancies, is visual pleasure promising gustatory joy.

The pomelo rinds, washed in several changes of salt solution and dried, are in large, bottle-high sections and can carry designs, letters, names. The *dayap* rinds are tiny, and are therefore incised in lines and whorls. In Laguna the *dayap* are not usually carved, but are stuffed with *nata de coco* before being cooked in syrup, and there is simple artistry in the milky-white peeking through the lime-green.

RICE WAFERS. Perhaps the most unusual example of food art, however, is the *kiping* of Lucban, Quezon province. This is a rice wafer about seven inches log, made from rice flour *(galapong)* and water. The thin paste is colored with brilliant dyes (fuchsia, emerald, vermillion, sunshine yellow, orange), poured on *kabal (Fragraea raemosa)* or banana leaves, steamed, peeled off before it hardens, then allowed to dry. The result is a leaf-shaped (if molded on *kabal*) or square (if on banana leaf squares) wafer on which the veins show. It is of course edible -- fried briefly in hot oil, and dipped into or coated with syrup or thin coconut jam or a salty-sweet sauce usually served with *lechon* (roast pig). Before it is eaten, however, it serves as an art object and decorative element that is the central motif of the Lucban town fiesta.

Like many other towns in Central Luzon, Lucban's patron saint is San Isidro Labrador, a Spanish saint who was adopted as patron saint of the Filipino farmer. The feast of San Isidro, May 15 (the height of summer and of harvest) is celebrated in Pulilan, Bulacan, with a procession of decorated carabaos kneeling in turn in front of the church; in a Nueva Ecija town with a rice-cake festival; and in Lucban with the unique and beautiful *Pahiyas*.

Hiyas means jewel, and so *pahiyas* could mean "making jewels," or "transforming into gems." Actually, says Rosauro de la Cruz, playwright, TV director, and native Lucbanin, the word used in Lucban is *payas*, meaning to hang up decorations. It is a word unwritten, he says, used colloquially and orally. When the need for publicity, and for naming the festival in print and signage came in the 60s or 70s, someone coined *pahiyas*, combining the act

of decorating with the "jewels" used. So that is exactly what happens at fiesta time -- the town of Lucban turns into a jewel, bright with the gem-colors and fantasy-shapes of *kiping* shaped and transformed.

The houses along the route of the procession (the patron saint's and other saints' statues are borne through the town, accompanied by priest and congregation) are especially decorated, and participate in a contest. The prizes (P5000; appliances like TV sets and washing machines) aren't much, but the community spirit, the joy of doing, and the wish to be declared winner before one's neighbors, are a significant force.

The motive for decorating and celebrating is primarily thanksgiving for the earth's bounty. In this community of farmers, the bounty consists mainly of fruits of the earth, thus food crops, and therefore the decorations are made of food. On that one day the crops are not taken to market or consumed, but used for decoration. Rice stalks, white gourds, stringbeans, eggplants; pineapples, green mangoes, soursops, pomelo (*Lucban*, from which the town derives its name), rambutan, bananas, coconuts; town specialties like pork sausages *(longganisang Lucban)* and sticky-rice cakes *(suman)*; even egg shells, special breads (fish-shaped), prawns and roast pigs -- all become decorations.

The central decoration, however, is the jewel-colored *kiping*. These may be hung in rows so that they move in the wind; or used to pave house fronts or form decorative patterns. Especially they are made into the *arangya* (chandeliers), a basic shape: *kiping* tied by strings, individually, to circular frames which are then assembled in tiers into window-size, one-storey or two-storey chandeliers. They are also made into an infinity of other shapes. Because the festival has gone on for many years, the Lucbanin have imagined, invented, created, and elaborated the shape into a myriad expressions.

The chandeliers may be in spirals instead of a series of frames. They may be combined with fruits or food: green mangoes, soursop, bunches of *suman*, *rambutan*, ferns, coconut fronds may provide finials or embellishment. They may be accented with bits of leaf from the variegated (red and yellow) San Francisco plant, or with ferns.

The stiff, hard *kiping* may also be softened (in a plastic bag or in a slightly damp cloth) and shaped into flowers: roses, orchids,

sunflowers, sampaguitas, anthuriums, flowers of the imagination — giant or small, presented in bunches and arrangements, or individually. It may be crumbled or broken into pieces and used as mosaic -- to form a mural on a housefront, or to ornament plain surfaces. (In the church this year, for example, in front of the main altar, was an arrangement of mortar, pestle, and plow, all *kiping*-studded.)

The *kiping* leaves may also be made into sunbursts and "rose windows"; they may be threaded on sticks to represent leaves or plants; they may be shaped into large hearts, or fish (like those flown on poles outside Japanese houses). They may be used in conjunction with, or to accent other decorations -- the fine woven hats or fans of Lucban; the sausages or breads; *anahaw* leaves or ferns that grow on the cool slopes surrounding the town; rice straw or stalks; fruits or vegetables.

Each house along the procession route plans and executes its own decorations, making its own *kiping* or ordering quantities beforehand from the *kiping*-makers. Since the route changes yearly, everyone eventually gets involved, and there is much anticipation and excitement. Abbo de la Cruz, film director, spent the eve and the morning of the fiesta at a friend's house, where they were expressing what Lucbanin call *dalahikan* -- a community spirit and team idea-conception. We found him on the street, directing the placement of giant sunflowers of orange *kiping*, their centers a tightly-tied bunch of rice straw. It was a new decoration they had created that year.

There is competition between houses, not only for the prizes, but for spirit and spectacle. Yet, says Uro de la Cruz, it is all wordless, unspoken, non-verbal. No one declares, "I'm using green this year, so hands off, all the rest of you." Nor does anyone ask directly: "What are your plans this year?" Instead, one listens to the children, feels out *(pakiramdaman)* the neighbors and their activities, and then adjusts one's plans accordingly. There is a respect for the other, it being a competition leavened by communication and community spirit.

The *kiping*, the grains, vegetables, and fruits, are the basic decorative elements, the palette from which the townspeople create their edible, ephemeral art. There are, however, additions and deviations. During Martial Law, there were various tableaux with life-size dummies dressed in military fatigues, and bearing guns

This year there were telephone line-men (reflecting the lack of, and clamor for, telephones and telephone service), and one grouping representing the founders of Lucban. One year the *leche flan* (custard) maker saved a year's worth of eggshells and made a mural covering her whole housefront. Popular with all the children this year was a corner arrangement anchored to a post (bearing telephone and electric wires): on a "stage" of various fruits and nuts reigned a live monitor lizard *(bayawak)*, firmly tied to a *pandan* (screw pine) fruit. One husband and wife had prepared for weeks -- not only three large *arangya* (three weeks' work), but the representation of a *carretela* (horse-drawn carriage) on their second-floor balcony, loaded with real fruits and vegetables; a sunflower mural of *kiping*-mosaic to one side; and below, a real horse in a "stable" to go with the carriage above.

The fiesta starts with Mass in the parish church, the grounds of which are filled with booths displaying Lucban food and handicraft. That morning families -- grandparents to grandchildren, cousins, *compadres*, drinking friends, relatives -- are busy putting up the final, the large (kept hidden inside the houses, sheathed in bedsheets) decorations, and the finishing touches. Ladders are up against roofs, youths are hanging out of second-floor windows; elders are directing the artwork from the street; children are stringing, festooning, holding props for the principal "artists"; others wield electric drills, hammers, paintbrushes, pastepots, or "supervise" while drinking -- perhaps the potent Lucban *lambanog* (distilled coconut sap). The streets are alive with people, with artistry, and with color.

Lunch is at one's or one's neighbor's house, and in the old days all doors were open to all comers, even strangers. Soon after lunch, the judges (usually including Oscar Zalameda, the one Lucbanin artist with an international reputation) walk around the prescribed streets and make their choices. At about 4:00, San Isidro Labrador is borne in procession past the *kiping*-resplendent houses. Formerly, the edible decor was at this point thrown to the people in procession, or given away to friends and relatives. This year, the house-owners were asked to keep their decor on till midnight, so that they could be admired under streetlight as in sunlight.

But since the fiesta only lasts a day, the jewelling of Lucban ends at sundown. Then the art object turns utilitarian; the *kiping*

becomes food -- and a memory of beauty, of artistic impulses, of community bonding, of friendly competition, of the thrill of creation, of the daring to be different, of the last *pahiyas* before the next one, next year.

Where indeed does this impulse to beauty come from? Decorating the food, or decorating with it, does not add to its nutritional value, or to its flavor and taste, and not to its marketability. In fact, *pastillas* wrappers might be called an unnecessary expense, since the *pastillas* would be sold and eaten without them. Fruits in syrup taste the same, carved or uncarved. *Kiping* is not a rare delicacy, and used to be, in my mother's girlhood, a children's snack costing one centavo apiece.

In all these, obviously, it is the expression that matters, and the expression is usually called for by a special occasion, like the fiesta. Why indeed should the utilitarian not have its moment of beauty? Clarita Manrique, 76, who has been cutting pastillas wrappers since she was 10, says she does it because she enjoys it, and because at fiestas it was a pleasure to watch the "tails" waving in the breeze, and people exclaiming, and tucking them into their pockets to take home. And of course for a fiesta the wrappers had to be magnificent.

In Lucban, the *kiping*, the food decorations, the effort and the work, are part of the joyous fiesta package -- the houses open to all comers, the special food, the town band, the masses and procession. At the *pahiyas*, the townsfolk are all craftsmen and artists.

Kiping comes in colors not usually seen on ordinary days -- flame, fuchsia, emerald, vermilion, gold. Art critic Alice Guillermo points out that color, besides being a natural phenomenon, is culture-bound "because each culture has its own traditional lore or has developed its own technologies of producing pigments and dyes and, from these, its own chromatic code or range of hues." When used in art and in systems of communication, therefore, it expresses meanings rooted in the cultural traditions of a society. (4)

The *kiping* colors are those associated with indigenous, non-hispanized ethnolinguistic groups (e.g. the Maranaos and Maguindanaos of Mindanao; the Bontoc and Kankanay of the Cordillera) rather than with Hispanized or lowland Christian groups, to which the Lucbanin belong. In *kiping* colors one sees the primacy of values over hues, the association of color with light, the "penchant for transparent materials as vehicles for color," the vivid

primal spectrum expressing links with nature and light -- in effect the indigenous, earth-linked culture.

Kiping is art, food, decoration, and thanksgiving; thus a prayer, a symbol, a sign of community bonding. It speaks to the town of the past, and of a communal consciousness; of the fiesta present, shared and ongoing; and of the future, also to be shared and celebrated. Its brief jewel-life makes it ephemeral, and yet eternal, because it will always be there. It is food art expressing the joy of being alive, being Lucbanin, and being Filipino -- in one's own town on a bright Maytime morning.

NOTES

[1]Fernando Zobel de Ayala, **Philippine Religious Imagery** (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila, 1963), 49.

[2]Alejandro R. Roces, **Fiesta** (Manila: Vera-Reyes, Inc., 1980), 114-117.

[3]Cf. Luning Bonifacio Ira, "Sweet and Sour," **The Culinary Culture of the Philippines**, ed. Gilda Cordero-Fernando (Manila: Bancom Audiovision Corporation, 1976), 169-177.

[4]Alice Guillermo, **Color in Philippine Life and Art** (Manila: Museo ng Kalinangan Filipino, Cultural Center of the Philippines, 1992), 5-17.

Food in Philippine History

ASIN ✻ SUKA SILI BAWANG & LUYA SIBUYAS

The Flavors of Mexico in Philippine Food and Culture

Las rutas del comercio no sirven tan solo para llevar mercaderías. Llevan tambien hombres y, con los hombres, las ideas, las palabras, las maneras de vida, las artesanias y las artes. Doscientos cincuenta anos de contacto y comercio entre Filipinas y Mexico tuvieron que dejar enormes huellas en los dos pueblos. . . .

Y asimismo llegaron a Filipinas, desde Mexico, una gran cantidad de cosas. No tan solo la plata de las minas, que hizo posible el comercio con China, sino miles de productos, de ideas, de maneras de vida, importantes unas, humildes las otras, que son ahora parte integrante de la cultura filipina, que el filipino actual consume y usa, sin saber muchas veces de su origen mexicano.

Rafael Bernal: **MEXICO EN FILIPINAS, Estudio de una transculturación** (1965)

Food was among these humble but important culture-bearing objects brought to the Philippines by Mexican officials and friars, by soldiers and sailors (the "guachinangos," Bernal calls them). The grains, fruits, vegetables, and dishes that travelled from Mexico to the Philippines are not only recorded in history, but are especially engraved in the language. The Mexican names have persisted, and have been adapted into the vernaculars, without being replaced by local names. Where there is no local name, but only a Mexican one -- Filipinized or not -- therefore, the Mexican origin is quite clear.

In an effort to understand more deeply, at ground level, the Mexican presence in Philippine culture, this paper explores the foods in the Philippines that reveal Mexican origins. What are they? What are they called now? How are they prepared? How do these

preparations compare to those in Mexico? Are they the same, or vastly changed, indigenized, Filipinized? What does this say then about *transculturación* -- the travelling, transmission and transformation of culture?

FRUITS

"Fruit immigrants," Isagani Medina calls them, and lists thirteen of "American" -- thus Mexican -- origin: guava/*bayabas*, pineapple/*pinya*, papaya, alligator pear/avocado/*abocado*, cashew/*kasuy*, sweet sop/sugar apple/*atis*, custard apple/*anonas*, sour sop/*guyabano*, camachile/*kamatsili*, Spanish plum/*siniguelas*, chico, star apple/*kaimito*, and aratiles.[1] To these one must also add the important *cacao*, which is a fruit, although not eaten as one, but made into chocolate.

GUAVA. Called *guayaba* in Mexico, this is the *bayabas* of the Philippines, and makes a good case study for an immigrant fruit that became thoroughly naturalized. Medina cites Fr. Manuel Blanco's theory (1845) that the guava is indigenous, proof cited being the "petrified trees and fossilized leaves found in the adobe quarries of Guadalupe, Mandaluyong, Meycauayan", and a "Philippine variety of guava, probably the *kalimbahin* unearthed in a fourteenth-century bowl in Bolinao, Pangasinan in 1964." Because of the *bayabas-guayaba* nomenclature, however, I am inclined to believe in the Mexican origin, in which Juan J. Delgado S.J. (writing in 1751) concurs:

"No hay duda que este arbol llamado guayabo de los espanoles, y de los naturales bayabas, es traido de Nueva Espana, pero en estas islas, se ha producido de tal suerte que estan llenos de el todos los campos, y principalmente las estancias de ganada, porque donde caen los huesecillos, alli luego nacen, y se hacen hasta mejores que en la Nueva España."[2]

The guava obviously took well to Philippine soil, and now grows wild or cultivated. The Aetas of Guimaras Island supply it to the Trappist monks for their jelly; some farmers in Capas, Tarlac, plant it for the same purpose.

Its medicinal uses are well known and often cited. Delgado continues:

"Cuando se come cruda, dice que restrine; que muy madura, relaja el estomago y cria lombrices. . . . El cocimiento de las hojas es muy

provechoso para las obstrucciones del bazo y para las piernas hinchadas, haciendo baños. Curanse, con las hojas secas y despolvoreadas, las heridas y llagas, y no hay duda que tendrá otras muchas virtudes y facultades en la medicina este arbol de guayabo, que se desconocen en la actualidad." (515)

To this Medina adds: a decoction of the unripe fruit and leaves, and the cortex of bark and roots, is used to wash ulcers and wounds; tender leaves slightly crushed relieve sea or bus sickness, or to clear up clouds from the corners of the eyes. Given internally, the decoction of leaves is anti-diarrheal, as are the unripe, finely powdered berries. In Bohol, small cut pieces of guava leaves are wrapped in cloth and placed on the forehead for fever, or around the waist or chest for asthma or cough.

Folk practice in rites of circumcision has the boys chew guava leaves to spit on the wound as both astringent and disinfectant. And it is reported that the Pinatubo Aetas make the green fruit into necklaces and wear it as protection against evil spirits. In Laoag, after burying a dead relative, members of the bereaved family used to wash themselves in water in which guava leaves had been soaked and boiled.

As food, of course, the guava is eaten off the tree: relished both when green and crisp, or when ripe and sweet, and one has to compete with the birds for it. It is cooked in syrup or made into jelly. Especially and uniquely, it is used to flavor *sinigang*, the stew that is soured with countless native souring agents. The Ilonggos use the leaves to flavor *paksiw na alimusan*.

Many of these uses, medicinal, cultural and culinary, probably did not come from Mexico, but rose from the adaption and nativization of the fruit. It is now definitely part of Philippine life and lore. Riddles about the guava proliferate (e.g. "Palayok ni Isko/Punong-puno ng bato" -- Isko's cooking pot is full of stones). Placenames are derived from it, e.g. Bayabasan and Balong Bayabas in Cavite; Bayabas in Meycauayan, Bulacan and Lopez, Quezon; Mabayabas in Taysan, Batangas, and Barrio Guayabal in Cauayan, Isabela.

And the guavas of childhood summers are entrenched in memory: Nick Joaquin writes eloquently in "May Day Eve" of winds whirling and whistling, "wafting unbearable childhood fragrances of ripe guavas" to the young men and women of Intramuros "one wild Mayday midnight."[3]

PINEAPPLE. The pineapple, historical accounts say, "was introduced to the Philippines by the Spanish at an early date, certainly by the latter part of the 16th century,"[4] although Medina cites a report by Bishop Domingo de Salazar (1586) that reports pineapples as among the fruits imported from China by the Philippines.

The fact that it is called *piña/pinya* in almost all Philippine languages (except for Bontok, where it is called *apangdan* or *pangdan* because of its similarity to pandanus, and in Tausug, where it is called *pisang*, the Indonesian word for banana), suggests that it came to the Philippines from Mexico, not China. Although the pineapple travelled and proliferated in many countries, it is only in the Philippines that it was used to make the delicate fabric called *piña*, one of the world's most unique handwoven fabrics.

As food, it is eaten fresh, or made into juices, jams, candies and salads. It is grown in large plantations in Mindanao, and exported by the multinational companies Dole and Del Monte. The unique Philippine food-use, however, would be the use of green pineapple to sour *sinigang*, and the making of *nata de piña*, a white, translucent gelatinous sweet grown on the surface of pineapple juice (and said to have been accidentally discovered by Luisa Fernandez of Pagsanjan, Laguna, in 1861).

PAPAYA. Again, there is no other name for this in the country, although recognizable variants exist. It is *lapaya* in Bontok, *tapayas* in Bikol, *kayapa* in Pampango, *kapaya* or *kapayas* in Samar-Leyte, *kapayas* in Cebuano and Hiligaynon, *papyas* in Subanun, and *kapaya* or *papaye* in Tausug.

The ripe fruit is eaten for breakfast, as dessert, or made into jams and sweets. The green fruit is used as vegetable: cooked with chicken in *tinolang manok*, chopped or julienned and put in *lumpia* and *dinuguan*, pickled in fine strips as *atsarang papaya*. The crisp *malibalang* fruit in between greenness and ripeness is eaten as a snack, *kinilaw* -- dipped in vinegar.

And of course it is medicinal: sliced green papaya, rubbed on the face, removes freckles. Powdered seeds mixed with *abuta* bark make a powerful abortifacient in early pregnancy. An infusion of the boiled flowers hastens menstrual flow. The bruised leaves become a poultice in the treatment of rheumatism, and a decoction of the roots cures dyspepsia. The crushed leaves are sometimes

used in combination with soap or as a soap substitute, and are also used to deodorize the pork intestines to be made into sausage casings.

Folk beliefs surround the papaya, especially having to do with planting. In Despujol, Romblon, it is not planted in front of windows, because that would make a resident of the house die. To make the papaya sweet, farmers in Tibanban, Generoso, Davao City, coat the first ripe fruits with sugar while muttering an incantation: "May you be sweet." Priests are said to have planted papayas near their convents in the belief that the fruit curbs sexual desires.

AVOCADO. The name is the Anglification of *aguacate*, and Medina states that:

"All the avocado trees now in the Philippines have been introduced after the American occupation of the Archipelago, thirty-two budded varieties having been introduced before 1916 . . . It was William S. Lyon, horticulturist of the Bureau of Agriculture (now the Bureau of Plant Industry) who is credited to have reintroduced the avocado to the Philippines from Hawaii in 1903." (70-71)

This late introduction probably explains why there are few folk beliefs about the avocado, and seemingly no place names relating to it.

Most interesting, however, is its use as food. It is not made into *guacamole*, for example, nor into salads the American way (except in some restaurants), but is treated in the Philippines as a fruit. It is made into ice cream, for example, or scraped from the skin, mashed, and eaten with milk and sugar. It is eaten as is, in Bontoc. The mature leaves, fresh or dried, are made into a tea, sometimes with mango leaves, and the tea taken with such snacks as *puto-bumbong*, *suman* or *bibingka* (rice cakes).

KASUY. The local name, *kasuy*, and the English name, *cashew*, both come from the Portuguese *acaju*, *acajuiba* or *cajueiro*, which come from the original Tupi words *acaju*, *acajou*, or *acaju-iba*. There is a native name as well, however, *balubad*, which has given names to barrios Balubad in Silang, Cavite, Bulacan, Bulacan, and Atimonan, Quezon.

Although the Filipino eats the cashew nut toasted, or toasted and salted as most other nationalities do, it is also made into candies in the Spanish style, like *suspiros de kasuy* or *turrones de*

kasuy. The soft, yellow, fleshy fruit, however, is also eaten (sliced fine and crushed with salt), or made into wine, or boiled and sweetened into a dessert, and the young leaves eaten as greens.

Roasting the nuts is done carefully since the smoke is an irritant (said to make chickens catch cold), and the oil caustic, producing wartlike brown marks and inflammation. The Pinatubo Aetas use the skin of kasuy seeds as medicine -- plastered on temples and forehead as a cure for headaches.

ATIS. The name for the sugar apple or sweet sop used in the Philippines is from the Aztec *ahate* or *quaht-zapotle*, and in 1667, Fr. Navarrete praises the *ates*, "which for odor and taste I consider superior to all fruits which God has created." So plentiful was it that Fr. Delgado thought it to be indigenous: "Tengo para mi que es fruta natural de estas islas, por la abundancia que de ella hay en todas partes . . ." (519). The town of Taysan, Batangas, is "a metathesis of *Atisan* meaning 'atis grove.'"

This fruit is mostly eaten *au naturel*, although it is now also made into ice cream and juice, and some chefs have experimented by using it in sorbets, fruit coulis and sauces.

Its medicinal uses include: pulverized seeds mixed with coconut oil are applied on the scalp to rid it of head lice; the green fruit is used as astringent against diarrhea and dystentery; leaves can be poultices against dyspepsia and for ulcers and malignant sores; powdered dried seeds are made into a paste-like abortifacient; the roots are purgatives; lemon and atis tops are heated together to use as a massage to relieve colds and coughs.

ANONAS. Although not as popular as its relatives, the *atis* and the *guyabano*, the custard apple is referred to as early as 1609 by Antonio de Morga, and in 1751 Fr. Delgado writes: "Asi en Visayas como en tagalos se da muy bien el arbol llamado *anonas*, aunque tambien es raro, y pienso que es traido de la Nueva España." He blames its comparative rarity on the fact that "los naturales no logran utilidad positiva, cual se alcanza por la venta, principalmente en Visayas; si alguno cuida y cultiva algun arbol de estos . . . es para comer de su fruta o regalarla" (518-519).

It is eaten fresh, or made into desserts, jams and jellies. The green fruits are used to treat diarrhea and dystentery, the leaves as external suppurants, or plastered on the stomachs of children

suffering from indigestion. The *herbolario* (native healer) is said to tie up the toes and fingers of patients with anonas bark to drive away evil spirits.

GUYABANO. The name from the Haitian (Arawak) *guanabano* or *anona* identifies a tree from the Antilles and eastern coast of Mexico, where it is known in the Aztec form *cuahitle* and *nanahuitle*. Medina illustrates the "linguistic transformation and migration of the original Spanish forms *guanabano* or *guanabana*":

"They become or appear in corrupted forms as *bayubana, dayabana* or *gayubano* in Ilokano; *atti, gayubano* or *guanaba* in Ibanag; *gayubano* or *gayabana* in Pangasinan; *guiabano* in Sambal; *benabana* or *unaba* in Kapamapangan; *guyabano* or *guayabano* in Tagalog; *guyabano* or *llabanos* in Bikol . . .; *banano* or *yabanos* in Samar-Leyte; *babana* . . . in Hiligaynon . . . *sikukarabaw* in Cebuano . . . and *labanus* in Tausug in Mindanao. As a consequence, our Philippine dialects have been enriched immensely in the process." (80-81)

The guyabano is eaten as it is, sweet and fresh, or made into juice or ice cream, preserves and sweets. The ripe fruit is used in treating scurvy and liver diseases; the green in treating dysentery. The Pinatubo Aetas boil the leaves in water and use the brew to wash ulcers and wounds; the green bark is rubbed and pasted on wounds to prevent bleeding. The roots are boiled with lime to make a faint red dye.

CAMACHILE. The Tagalog name *camachile/kamatsili* comes from the Nahuatl world *cuauhmochitl*, and has variations in other vernaculars: *kamunsil* in Hiligaynon, *karamansili* in Ibanag, *damortis/kamantiris* in Ilokano, *kamansilis* in Maguindanao, *kamantilis* in Pampango, and *kamansilis* in Cebuano. The fruit, native to the west coast of Mexico and Central America, was introduced from the Philippines into India as the "Manila tamarind."

It is not usually cooked in any way in the Philippines, but eaten as is, off the tree. It has, however, given its shape and name to cookies: the somewhat soft *camachile* Tagalogs sometimes eat with *pansit*, and the harder and more crunchy *kinamunsil* of the Ilonggos.

It has other folk uses as well: the bark, which contains tannin, is used for dyeing fishnets or tanning leather, and a decoction of it as an astringent enema and wash for ulcers. An infusion of leaves

and salt is an abortifacient. The tree is used for fences and as fuel, the leaves as mulch. The Pinatubo Aetas, who live off the land, use the powdered bark as a fish poison, which kills small fishes and affects large ones, but does not even stun shrimps.

Place-names referring to it include Pasong Camachile and the Camanchile river in Gen. Trias, Cavite, and Paso de Camachele in Ternate, also in Cavite. Barrio Camastilisan is in Calaca, Batangas, and Damortis is in Pangasinan.

SINIGWELAS. The native name derives from the Spanish *ciruela* (Spanish plum), which was introduced to the country in the 18th century or earlier. When it is in season, it is displayed in markets in large round baskets *(bilao)*, and sold by weight, by number, or in bags. The green fruit is made into pickles, the half-ripe into preserves, the ripe eaten as is. The astringent bark is scraped and used in Negros Oriental to remove the fishy smell, and to give a mildly bitter taste to *kinilaw* (fresh fish marinated/dressed in vinegar).

The same bark is used as a gargle for mouth and throat pains, and taken internally as anti-dysenteric and in infantile tympanitis. Fr. Blanco reports the fruit to be medicinal as well, for treating dysentery.

CHICO. The contraction of *chico zapote* became the Philippine name, the Spanish name being an hispanization of the Nahuatl *xicotzapotl*. Introduced to the islands at an early date, it is a local favorite, and has four varieties: Pineras, which is small and sweet, Ponderosa which is large and juicy, Sawo Manila and St. Croix.

The ripe fruit is peeled and sectioned, or sucked off the skin, and generally eaten as is, although it is now being used in salads and desserts. The flowers are made into a powdery body-rub for use after childbirth. The bark, which contains a milky juice or latex, is used to cure diarrhea and fever, and as an ingredient in chewing gum. It also tans sails. The cortex is used as tonic and to cure fever; the seed is diuretic.

Barrio Sico in San Juan, Batangas, honors the chico, says Medina. He cites Mariano Henson, historian/gourmet of Angeles, Pampanga, as saying that the name of Mexico, Pampanga, comes from *masicu*, referring to the abundance of chicos. The first Philippine-made computer, following the example of the Apple and its clones (Pineapple; Star Apple), was called a Chico. The folk expres-

sion *"amoy chico"* (smelling like chico) identifies a drunk, or someone smelling of liquor.

CAIMITO. Although the star apple is indigenous to the Americas (the word comes from the Arawak *caimito, caymito, cayemiete*), it was allegedly introduced to the Philippines in 1905 by William Lyon, horticulturist of the Bureau of Agriculture in Manila. It therefore does not have the history or lore of fruits introduced in the Spanish regime. It is used as a dessert fruit, *au naturel*, chilled, frozen or with cream. There are barrios called Caimituhan in Trece Martires and in General Trias in Cavite, where the fruit is also called the "Soriano Fruit," having been planted during the incumbency of Representative Antero Soriano (1925-1929).

ARATILES. Aratiles/ratiles is a corruption of the Spanish *datil/datiles*, records Medina. It is called *cereza* in Ilokano and Hiligaynon, and *manzanitas* or *zanitas* in Ilokano and in Ibanag. It is a favorite shade tree, and children climb it for its fruit, formerly also, Medina says, "blowing air into the empty red fruit shells and [making] . . . little balls out of them" in pre-plastic balloon times. It is not cooked into any dishes, being treated mainly as a "wild" fruit to be gathered. The bark's soft and pliable bast is used in rope-making, and an infusion of its flowers is said to be antihysteric, diaphoretic, antispasmodic and antidyspeptic.

CACAO. This is certainly one of the most important Mexican contributions to Philippine food, since chocolate is a significant food product. Delgado reports that it was in the governorship of Diego de Salcedo that a few "pies vivos de cacao" were brought in, and were first planted and cultivated in Ilog, Negros Occidental, where lived and labored Juan de Avila, S.J. ("a quien deben las islas esta bien tan grande"), although credit has been given elsewhere: ". . . aunque el reverendo historiador de las cronicas de la provincia de san Gregorio lo atribuye a uno de su religion, pero la antiguedad no consiste en opiniones, sino en los años."

So well was the tree acclimatized that Delgado expresses wonder at its proliferation despite being hardly tended, and just allowed to flourish. He points out that the flesh of the fruit, "echada en infusion de agua, y bebida a las diez del dia, y sobre

tarde, es fresquísima y muy saludable." He himself drinks it, right after picking the fruit. He adds:

"Se puede comer tambien parte de lo interior de la cáscara, que es como medio dedo de gruesa y por de dentro blanca. La manteca del cacao es remedio eficaz para los que padecen de calor en el cutis, en la boca y labios escaldados. Para unciones del higado, riñones y pulmones, principalmente en los principios de la ética, es remedio eficaz que la desarraiga." (536)

Chocolate came to be prepared and served in the Philippines principally as a drink, without which, it is said, the *españolas, mestizas* and *principalia* of Intramuros could not bear to start the day. Chinese "chocolateros" would go from house to house with stones for grinding the chocolate and preparing *tablías* according to the family taste. These were sometimes imprinted with the family name or emblem. The chocolate was then cooked with milk in special pots (called *chocolateras*), and frothed up with wooden *batidores*. It was served thick (*espeso*, signalled as "chocolate E") or thin (*aguado*, or "chocolate A"). The indefatigable Delgado has only praise for it:

"Las virtudes del chocolate pocos hay que las ignoren, pues es el mejor desayuno que una puede usar por las mananas, y principalmente para los estudios no hay cosa semejante; porque sustenta, nutre, corrobora, expele los flatos, quita los vahidos de cabeza, y no grava el estomago, sino que lo fortifica para el trabajo. Abre la memoria, y la afirma, y los que estan acostumbrados a beberlo, si lo dejan, no harán nada en toda la mañana, como lo tengo experimentado." (536)

It is now an indispensable Philippine drink. In Cebu and Negros Oriental, Leyte and Samar, breakfast is generally *tsukuate* or *tsikwate* with *puto maya, budbod* or *suman* (sticky rice cooked in coconut milk, with sugar or salt, sometimes with a wisp of ginger), whether in home or marketplace.

VEGETABLES, SPICES, TUBERS

CAMOTE. Of the root products brought to the Philippines from Mexico, the most significant would be *camote*, the sweet potato. Bernal points out that the name is used in the Philippines only for *camote blanco, camote morado* being called *ube*. The fact that Filipinos use no other name is a significant proof of Mexican origin.

Camote is indispensable to Philippine life, being the staple food of the poor, of hunters and gatherers, and of people in the

rural areas. For the Mangyans of Mindoro, it is equivalent to rice; for the farmers of Samar and Leyte, it is a staple. It was the survival food of the war years; it still is the survival food of the poor.

The root is boiled, roasted, baked. In Leyte it is eaten with *lechon* (roast pig) to cut the grease. In Bohol it is boiled and eaten with *kinilaw*, with *tuba* as accompanying drink. It is also sweetened and made into various desserts, e.g. in Pampanga, where it is served with syrup and carabao's milk. The leaves are brewed into tea, and cooked as a vegetable in *sinigang* or native salads (boiled, mixed with tomatoes and onions, dressed with vinegar). In urban Manila, the tuber is made into camote chips, or cooked in syrup, skewered, and called "camote-cue."

The folk expression *"mangamote"* means to fail in an examination. It is thus a food word travelling into a non-food area, signifying ease with the foreign, and its acceptance into the level of everyday life. The conjugation (*k* to *ng*; *ka* to *nga*) is crucial as well, since it signals the acceptance of the word into the language and the culture.[5]

SINGKAMAS. This is the Mexican *jicama*, which in the Philippines is eaten raw, dipped in vinegar and salt and sometimes chili (*kinilaw*, this is sometimes called). It is also cooked as a vegetable (*guisado*, sautéed in garlic, onions, tomatoes and meat and/or shrimps), put into *lumpia*, or made into pickles. One Makati restaurant offers an "Ensalada de toronja, jicama y aguacate." Since it is abundant in the hot season, it has been used in the folk religious drama called the *sinakulo* as the "apple" with which Eve was tempted in the Garden of Eden.

MANI. The name is Caribbean for peanut; the Mexican name is *cacahuate*. In the Philippines it is boiled, and then kept hot and sold in little carts on the streets; it is also roasted, or shelled and fried with or without garlic, with or without its red skin. It is of course made into candies and sweets (*bandi, suspiros de mani*, peanut brittle). But especially it is used for the sauces of *mole* and *kari-kari*, and to flavor *tamales*.

SAYOTE. The Mexican *chayote* grows abundantly in the Philippines, and is made into pickles and cooked as a vegetable, generally *guisado*, in lumpia or as pickles. It also became the

substitute in apple pies (sweetened and dusted with cinnamon) when apples became scarce and expensive. The young tendrils *(talbos ng sayote)* are cooked (usually sautéed) as a vegetable.

ACHUETE. The annatto seed *(achiote, axiote)* is used, as it is in Mexico, to give flavor and color to certain foods: e.g. *kare-kare*, and the bright sauce for *pancit palabok*. Among the Maranaos, the word has evolved further; there it is called *suweter*.

PANOCHA. The word, Bernal says, is only used in Mexico and in the Philippines, and it refers to the same thing: raw brown sugar, unrefined, here usually molded in coconut-shell halves, and used principally in the making of sweets. It is also called *piloncillo* in some parts of Spanish America, but although *pilon* is used in the sugar industry to signify the original jars in which sugarcane syrup was allowed to drip and turn into sugar, the word is not used in the Philippines to refer to sugar.

MAIZ / MAIS. Corn was introduced into the Philippines through the Mexican connection, and there was some attempt to make it replace rice, says Bernal:

"Un tiempo se trató de suplir el consume del arroz con él del maiz. No se pudo lograr en parte porque a la mujer filipina le pareció que el trabajo de preparar el maiz en forma de tortillas era excesivo y que el sabor no era tan agradable como el del arroz hervido en agua, la famosa 'morisqueta'."

Although it was never made into tortillas, however, it came to be well accepted in Cebu, where it is roughly ground and cooked like rice -- the "corn-rice" many Cebuanos prefer to plain steamed rice. Throughout the rest of the Philippines, however, the general plaint is that corn does not fill the stomach as well as rice, and therefore cannot replace this as staple, although efforts have been made in recent years, in order to remedy rice shortages. In Cebu, however, many say that rice cannot fill the stomach as well as does corn-rice.

The indigenization of corn is not as cereal for meals, but in snacks and desserts. The Cebuano *pintus* and the Ilonggo *alupi* are both sweet cornmeal cakes wrapped in corn husks. There is even a corn ice cream sold by street vendors in their decorated carts -- popularly called "dirty ice cream," because mothers invariably tell their children not to buy it because it's "dirty", not made in sanitary

kitchens. In Dumaguete, *kinilaw* is served with *sinalok*, rounds of corn meal steamed in an upright bamboo tube, which provide flavor and textural contrast to the fresh fish. It is also of course boiled or roasted on coal -- on or off the streets -- and made into soups, vegetable dishes, salads, and such snacks as *binatog na mais* and peppery "corn-nicks."

KAMATIS. The tomato, the Mexican *tomate/jitomate*, is as indispensable to Philippine cooking as it is to Mexican cuisine. No *guisado* can begin without it, and thus most vegetable and noodle dishes start with: browning the garlic, adding onions and cooking them till translucent, then adding sliced tomatoes and cooking them till soft -- then adding the *sahog* (meat or shrimps) and finally the vegetables. Tomatoes are also used to sour *sinigang* and *tinola*, and are eaten fresh, sliced, with fish (broiled, salted, smoked). A farmer might go out to the fields carrying rice, a bit of fish, salt and a tomato. It goes as well into sauces, salads, and relishes.

DISHES

It is especially in the cooked dishes that one can see transformation and indigenization at work.

ADOBO. This has been called the national dish of the Philippines, because it is the best known to readers of cookbooks and to foreigners, and for a while was the only native dish on the menus of restaurants. The name, which, unqualified, usually refers to pork or chicken, or to pork and chicken mixed, is also applied to any other ingredient cooked *adobado* -- stewed in vinegar, garlic, bay leaf and peppercorns -- *adobong pusit* (squid), *adobong talaba* (shellfish), *adobong kangkong* (swamp cabbage). There is even *adobadong mani*, peanuts cooked in oil and garlic (and no vinegar).

The name is obviously Spanish, and may have been derived from Spain, where *adobado* is a pickled dish (in the Philippines *adobado* refers to the process), or from Mexico, where adobo is a sauce, and there are also *adobo de crema, de iguana, de liebre*, and others. In Mexico, however, the ingredients are more commonly condiments like chiles, pimentos, garlic, tomatoes, bay leaf, cloves, perhaps some lemon juice -- not the vinegar central to the Philippine adobo.

It may be that the Mexicans who came to the Philippines made their adobo, and the Filipinos adapted it to their taste (thus essayist Carmen Guerrero Nakpil credits Mexico rather than Spain with it). It may also be, however, as food historian Raymond Sokolov believes,[7] that the Philippine adobo is Spanish in name only: the Spaniards/Mexicans saw the dish the Filipinos were already cooking, recognized its similarity to theirs, and called it "adobo de los naturales," which are the words used by dictionary maker Pedro de San Buenaventura (1613).

Certainly both Mexican and Filipino adobos are "pickled" -- one in spices and lemon juice, the other in spices and vinegar, and one can thus keep (or travel with) both without refrigeration. The Mexican name, however, is firmly attached to the Philippine dish, and no other name is currently in use.

BARBACOA. In Mexico this is meat (lamb, beef head, etc.) wrapped in maguey leaves and roasted in a pit. In the Philippines *barbakuwa/balbakwa* is not necessarily roasted, and not necessarily meat. *Balbakwa* in Cebu, Davao, Iligan, and other Cebuano-speaking areas, is a stew of oxtail and/or calves' feet; in areas of Ilonggo migration, like General Santos, Cotabato, it is made of tripe, tail, feet, skin, and other cheap cuts of beef; in some parts of Cebu it is made of pork. In these places it is an early-morning stew served in markets, as breakfast for the vendors and loaders. In Luzon and Negros Occidental it is fish preserved in layers of salt *(binuro)*.

How the Mexican word came to be attached to such diverse dishes, none of them pit-roasted, is a mystery that needs to be solved.

ATOLE. It is a drink in Mexico: "Bebida de harina de maiz disuelta en agua o leche, generalmente con sabor de frutas o especies".[8] In the Philippines, only the idea of cooking grain in water is left. In Nueva Ecija it refers to rice cooked in water and used as a paste, not a food. Corn cooked in water probably did not appeal to people who preferred rice, and already had *lugaw*, a rice congee or gruel, as an alternative rice dish.

CHAMPURRADO. "Bebida de atole, chocolate, y piloncillo" in Mexico, in the Philippines it is a breakfast dish of rice cooked in chocolate and milk (sometimes coconut milk). It is often eaten

with something salty, like dried salted fish, or dried salted venison *(tapang usa)*. Corn in Mexico; rice in the Philippines; only the sugar is common.

MENUDO. Since the Spanish words *menudo* and *menudillo* refer to internal organs or offal, the Mexican menudo is a soup/stew "made with tripe plus a calf's foot, cooked long with onion, garlic, and chilies . . . combined with cooked whole hominy".[9] The Philippine *menudo*, on the other hand, is a dish of diced pork and pork liver cooked with diced potatoes, chick peas *(garbanzos)* and carrots. Only the pork liver seems to bind the two.

MOLE. Mole Poblana is famous and varied in Mexico, the sauce usually combining chiles, spices and various condiments, including chocolate and peanuts. Mole in the Philippines is usually chicken (sometimes beef) boiled, then browned in oil with garlic and onions, and finally cooked in tomato sauce and broth with vegetables, with toasted rice and peanuts added at the very last. It is similar to *kari-kari* (oxtail, calf's foot, and tripe), which has a sauce thickened with toasted rice and peanuts. Mole is, however, neither as popular or as widespread as kari-kari or adobo.

TAMALES. Never *tamal*, but always *tamales* whether singular or plural, this is a very popular food or snack, very obviously descended from the leaf- or cornhusk-wrapped Mexican *tamal*. It is not made from cornmeal, however; the Philippine food is basically a "rice flour preparation with crushed peanuts, chicken, pork, hard-cooked egg and condiments wrapped in banana leaves and boiled [steamed] . . . The chlorophyll of the banana leaves seems to leach into the rice preparation during boiling hence it is somewhat greenish."[10]

It differs from town to town, however -- in the amount of peanuts, in the condiments, in the degree of spiciness, and in the fineness or coarseness of the texture. The Pampanga, Tarlac and Samar versions are considered especially good. The most unique tamales I have encountered was in Meycauayan, Bulacan. It was tiny (about one-fourth the size of a regular *tamales*), beautifully wrapped in banana leaf into a trapezoidal packet, and it was sweet, without a trace of peanuts, spices or meat. This was a dessert *tamales*, only related to the rest by its wrapping.

CHICHARRÓN. Although some types of Philippine *chicharrón* resemble the *cortezas de piel* of Spain, the variety and usage and the term, suggest Mexican origin. There are local *chicharrones* of pork skin of course, but also of pork intestines *(chicharon bituka, chicharon bulaklak)*, carabao skin and chicken skin. They are eaten with rice during meals, or as snacks (usually dipped in vinegar), or cooked into vegetable stews, as the Ilokano *bagnet* is used in *pinakbet*.

It has been suggested that the Philippine *cocido* and *sili* (chile) have Mexican origins as well, but I have my doubts, since the local cocido is very similar to that of Spain, and the chili pepper varieties are almost identical to those in use in all of Southeast Asia, and have local names aside from *sili: labuyo, haba, kitikot, katumbal*, and others.

TRANSCULTURATION

A survey of the foods -- fruits, vegetables, tubers, seasonings, flavorings, condiments and cooked dishes -- in the Philippine repertoire that bear Mexican names, affirms that there are Mexican flavors in Philippine food and culture even today. Food, flavors, and ways of cooking entered Philippine life, in a process of *transculturación* that has had different modes.

The fruits came in as seeds or fruit trees, were planted, found soil and climate favorable, took root, flourished, and then took their place in Philippine foodways. They were cultivated, or grew wild.

Often, as most fruits are, they are eaten as is, fresh off the tree, like the *aratiles* and the *camachile*. Sometimes they are cooked, as fruits often are, into jams, jellies and preserves; sweets and candies. Sometimes they are used in uniquely Philippine ways: to flavor *sinigang*, as are the guava and the pineapple; to flavor fish *paksiw*, as guava leaves are used; their leaves as fiber for cloth, as in *piña*, which is unique to the country; the bark as condiment for *kinilaw*, as with *sinigwelas*. In almost every case, they were used as folk medicine, even as charms. In some cases, they gave their names to rivers, streets, villages, towns.

A similar process occurred with a vegetable like *sayote*, the *achuete* seed, and even *cacao*, all of which are used in largely the same way as they are in Mexico. Corn was "rejected" as meal cereal (except, regionally, as corn-rice), but indigenized as the primary ingredient for many types of snacks and desserts. Camote

has been thoroughly indigenized, with names and uses that are unique to the country.

Thus, although the fruits, vegetables, roots and other food plants, were eaten/used as they were in Mexico, they also came to have, in the Philippines, an *indigenization of usage* -- a complex of uses, recipes, folk beliefs, and place in Philippine life.

In the dishes, a more complex transculturation takes place. Sometimes the name barely suggests the origin, as in *atole*. (The Filipino chose rice over corn to cook with water and make into *champurrado*). In dishes like *mole* and *menudo*, only a thread of connection exists: peanuts in the sauce of mole, and liver in menudo. In both cases the dishes have been completely transformed.

Balbakwa is a puzzle, since the name could only have come from the Mexican barbacoa, but no similarity is left, neither of main ingredient nor cooking process.

If the Philippine adobo is indeed a Mexican derivation and not simply a "brother" recognized and named by the Spaniards with the term familiar to them, as Sokolov believes, this would be more thorough indigenization. The Hispanic "pickling sauce" or adobo became the universal Philippine pickling process -- cooking in vinegar, garlic and spices. In Mexico and Spain, adobado is the dish, adobo the sauce/process. In the Philippines adobo is the dish, and adobado the process applied to vegetable, fish, crustacean, shellfish, or meat.

Tamales are the best case study for transculturation. The original leaf- or cornhusk-wrapped meat-and-cereal snack is, in the Philippines, still leaf-wrapped, and made of meat and cereals -- and peanuts. But its flavor has changed, it has taken on innumerable regional variants, and as a food it has travelled so completely from Mexican palate to Philippine taste that it is unrecognizable to the former and totally claimed by the latter. And, in at least one case, it has completely changed category (dessert) and flavor (from salty/spicy to sweet).

The processes of cultural adaptation, therefore, include some or all of the following:

- transplanting the foreign food/element to the adoptive/adaptive soil;
- proliferation to the extent that places are named after it;
- acceptance into the diet in ways identical or similar to its native ways;

- elaboration of its food uses in new ways;
- entry into the belief system;
- entry into and elaboration in, the language;
- folk use and adaptation; and finally
- transformation into a Philippine food by the acquisition of uniquely local nuances, and firm placement in the Philippine repertory.

By this time the name may remain Mexican, but the food has been indigenized as Filipino.

The flavors of Mexico persist in Philippine life, but they have been nativized, indigenized, adapted and accepted into the core of the culture. The Mexican connection remains -- in the kitchen, in the palate, in the heart -- a brotherhood beneath the skin, deep because it voyaged through history into the society and lifeways, and then became entrenched in the culture. That is truly *transculturación.*

NOTES

[1]Isagani R. Medina, "Fruit Immigrants of the Philippines: A Study of their Origins, Uses and Impact on Filipino Society and Culture," 1985, 57-91.
[2]Juan Jose Delgado, S.J., **Historia general sacro-profana, política y natural de las Islas del Poniente llamadas Filipinas** (Manila: El Eco de Filipinas, 1892), 514-515.
[3]Nick Joaquin, "May Day Eve," in **Prose and Poems** (Manila: Bookmark, Inc., 1991 [first published 1952]), 30, 44.
[4]Lourdes R. Montinola, **Piña** (Metro Manila: Amon Foundation, 1991), 27.
[5]Edilberto N. Alegre, whose research is in food, culture and linguistics.
[6]Rafael Bernal, **Mexico en Filipinas: Estudio de una transculturación** (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico, 1965), 115.
[7]Raymond Sokolov, "The Meeting of East and West," in **Natural History** 6/90, 84, 86. Also "Some Like It Tart," **Natural History** 3/92.
[8]Alicia Gironella de'Angeli and Jose De'Angeli, **Gran libro de la Cocina Mexicana** (Mexico: Ediciones Larousse, 1988), Glosario, 232.
[9]Whitney, Joan, compiler, **Craig Claiborne's The New York Times Food Encyclopedia** (New York: Times Books, 1985), 273.
[10]Patricia T. Arroyo, **The Science of Philippine Foods** (Quezon City: Abaniko Enterprises, 1974), 302.

A Conversation with Fray Juan de Oliver on Drinking and Drunkenness

Gluttony the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines as "The vice of excessive eating. (One of the seven deadly sins)," and a **glutton** as "One who eats to excess or who takes pleasure in immoderate eating; a gormandizer" (OED 1971, 141-142). Fray Juan de Oliver, O.F.M., however, in his *Declaración de la Doctrina Christiana en Idioma Tagalog* (ca. 1583-1591) defines **Ang cayamoan** as "catacauan, sa pagcain, at sa pagynom, siyang ycalimang ponong casalanan" (177-180).

One example given in the OED refers to drinking: ". . . in eatynge and in drynkynge glotouns [1387]," but all the others refer only to eating: "Their sumptuous gluttonies and gorgeous feasts" (Milton, 1671); "I attribute it to his gluttonie, he being ye greatest eater that ever I knew" (Prideaux, 1681). Oliver's examples, on the other hand, include drinking and eating:". . . ang masolong magynum, ang nagpopotoc mandin ang canilang tiyan sa marlang canin, ang nagsasalacsac, at nagtotoac nang Cataoan, nang mangyaring masirtan pa nang canin, at nang Tuba, ay catacauan din yaong lahat." (177) He becomes quite descriptive: "Ungmaangcac pala ang tiyan, binoboli boli, babali balictar sa sahig nang bahay, nagdaramdam ang lahat na Cataoan na anaqui manganganac na babayi." (177)

From there he develops the theme of gluttony, concentrating mainly on drinking, using Tuba as a generic name for all liquor. The Filipinos, he says (referring to and addressing, presumably, the Tagalogs of Balayan, Batangas where he was stationed) exceed other people he has observed in other countries in their greed for drink ("tacao ninyo sa tuba"). Night and day are one in their drinking; they do not tire; their desire for it does not wane.

He compares them to beasts ("lungmalo rin pala camo sa dilan hayop nang pagcahunghang ninyo"), and asks rhetorically: "Doesn't the Dog have more sense than you do? The She-bear? The Horse? The Bird, the Fish? They stop eating and drinking when they are full, when their stomachs are content, and even if you put food and water in front of them when they are full not one would eat or drink even if forced, wanting only to play." (177)

But in your case, he goes on, your stomachs are never too full of Tuba ("di masucatan ang inyong tiyan nang Tuba"), you drink all day and even all night, you do not tire while there is drink left, and you only stop when you throw up, when you take leave of your senses, when you have to lie down, "cun maguin bato na nang pagcaualan loob, nang pagcaualang damdam sa Cataoan ninyo. Ay di pa camo lalo sa dilan hayop nang pagcahunghang?" (177)

He seeks out more metaphors in the animal kingdom, and compares them to the *ouac*, "na sungmasadolo rin nang Niyog, at ynoobus obus ang canilang tuba". Unlike men, however, "magaling pa ang ouac at nacapagyyngat sila nang canilang cataoan sa dongmodolit sa caniya." Drinking men are like the mosquito, he says, "ang Namuc," which gets drunk on our blood, "ongmaangca na lubha pala ang canilang Cataoan, sa pagcaniig, at gomapang gapang na sa lupa na ysa may di na macalipar, nang malaquing pagcabosog niya." (177-178) Ironically he calls drinking "asal hayop," a habit of beasts, and then points out that animals do not generally eat or drink to excess as men do.

He declares further that drinking should be a taking in of the amount of tuba proper to one's body, not an excess. They should not, as they do, fill their stomachs day after day, not stopping until the excess spills out of their lips ("ang pagsusuca"), and of what use is that which is thrown up? You are killing your souls day by day in this drunkenness, and your tuba is drowning you; you are not growing as Christians. The man who loves tuba excessively does not grow in wisdom, does not remember what is good. The drunken man only remembers wickedness ("catampalasan") to God and man; drinking is truly the source of evil deeds and evil thoughts, and evil words as well. He cites such examples as Sodom and Gomorrah, Balthasar and the writing on the wall, and the greedy man an Angel called a pig. (178-180) In the section on the Commandments of the Church, he identifies "ang pagcalango" among the mortal sins: "casalanang daquila . . . casalanang masaquit." (136)

Little is said about excessive eating. *"Canin"* is the only food mentioned, and it is somewhat difficult to imagine a glutton gorging on rice day and night. Oliver's tract on gluttony is therefore really a text about drinking and drunkenness. Since he is so direct, so detailed, and so indignant, one can only conclude that he was talking of what he saw as evil, and preaching against it with considerable passion.

His indignation is especially directed at the frequency, constancy, and long periods of drinking. His and other friars' European minds, used to certain hours for drinking (at meals, after hours) must have been boggled by people drinking in the morning, afternoon and evening. Some friars, it seems, poured out the (native) wine and broke the wine-jars, and Sinibaldo de Mas speaks up against that:

"Let him check sins, but not lawful games and amusements, since thereby other and illicit amusements will be prevented. Let him eradicate drunkenness, but not prohibit all use of wine to all; for if the cura drinks wine, why should not the Indian drink it in moderation? Let him not pour out the wine or break the wine-jars; for who has given him any authority for that? Because of some of these acts of imprudence, certain foolish laymen say that the ministers who come from Europa to become martyrs, become more than kings in their villages." (de Mas, 1843)

Oliver almost certainly did not realize that drinking hours are set by people's work schedules. Fishermen drink when they come in from the sea -- some in the morning, others in the afternoon or evening. Farmers drink after work in the fields. Everybody drinks at fiestas. There were no professionals and no office hours then, and thus no "after-hours" drinking as we know it today, "after-[work] hours" being possible all day.

Fray Oliver rages about the love for tuba. This may have been his generic name for alcoholic beverages, of which there were a number. Francisco Ignacio Alcina, S.J., who worked in Samar-Leyte for some 30 years, comments that "Perhaps the [Visayans] have more drinks that cause [drunkenness] than any of the other peoples of the universe." And he names the drinks: *alac* or *alacsin* from Tuba, the "queen" of drinks, more so if it is *dalisai*, when it is strong as *aguardiente; cavaravan* and *pangasi* from the honey of bees; *intus* from sugarcane. Others mention liquor from nipa palm, and from rice. (Alcina, 1668)

Francisco Colin, S.J., in *Labor Evangelica*, has a different perception of the drinking (and eating) habits he observed, seeing an ability to hold liquor and continue to function:

"They eat sparingly but drink often; and when they are invited to a banquet, they are asked not to eat but to drink. They waste much time in both eating and drinking. . . . They spend a day and a night in this, amid great racket and cries, until they fall with weariness and sleep. But rarely do they become furious or even foolish; on the contrary, after they have taken wine they preserve due respect and discreet behavior. They only wax more cheerful, and converse better and say some witty things; and it is well known that no one of them when he leaves a banquet, although it be at any hour of the night, fails to go straight to his own house. And if he has occasion to buy or sell, and to examine and weigh gold or silver he does it with so great steadiness that the hand does not tremble nor does he make any error in the weight." (Colin, 1663)

In this conversation across centuries one could therefore explain to Fray Oliver that the community drinking of Filipinos, although frequent and of long duration, is not necessarily drunkenness. First of all, the timing is after work, before retiring. It is not the drinking of idle, but of working people. And it is never solitary drinking, but a community activity.

The drinking method prevalent in the country is *tagayan*, in which a drinkmaster *(tagatagay)* pours for each one, into one glass, which is passed around. The older method reported by Pigafetta was to have a common jar, into which straws were put (this was a thicker drink); later one jar was used for everyone.

The *tagatagay* is chosen for his judiciousness and balance: he can calculate, and pour liquor in such amounts that there would be enough for the round, and equal, fair shares for everyone -- and, even more important, he can control drunkenness, easing off on the drinks of those on the edge of excess.

Tagayan eventually evolved into *"KKB" (kanya-kanyang buhos)*, and after beer came into Filipino life, into *"kanya-kanyang bote"*, but the principle of drinking together remained, and drunkenness was exception rather than rule.

Another reason that drunkenness was not usual was that tuba has a rather low alcoholic content (30-40%), and it takes a lot of it to get drunk -- not like the *guhit* of gin, for example. *Lambanog*, being distilled, is much stronger, (70-90), but it is not as prevalent a drink

as tuba, which is so easily available daily, as soon as the *mananguete* delivers his "harvest" to the drink shops or centers.

Still another reason for the fact that long slow drinking does not necessarily end in drunkenness is that it is usually accompanied by *pulutan/sumsuman*. Pulutan has been recorded/reported in the early dictionaries, appearing as "polotan" in Pedro de San Buenventura's *Vocabulario de la lengua Tagala* (1613), and defined by Noceda and San Lucar (1860) as "a type of snack which one eats while drinking wine". It is food outside of meals and specific to drinking. It is never eaten alone or in solitary, but shared while drinking — *pinupulut-pulut*. It not only fills the stomach and cushions the impact of liquor, but also, being cut up in small pieces, is shared by the group, all of whom may contribute to the spread.

Pulutan is the food area where daring and imagination are especially demonstrated, because the roster of pulutan includes such exotica as *tamilok* (*Lyrodus siamensis* or shipworm, an elongated marine clam that burrows in wood), *sasing* (*Echiurus* family, sandworm), *salpo* (small sea cucumber), bat and ball (goat penis and testicles), up and down (goat brain and testicles), dog, mole crickets, *bayawak* (monitor lizard) and *sawa* (python), etc. These are not daily fare, *pang-araw-araw na ulam*, but something special for drinking sessions, for conversation, for some boasting, for male bonding.

One might also explain to Fray Oliver that steady drinking is not usual, because, as Fr. Colin noted, there is much singing and dancing involved with drinking. In the Visayas, especially, a drinking session is not complete without a guitar:

"The banquets are interspersed with singing, in which one or two sing and the others respond. The songs are usually their old songs and fables, as is usual with other nations. The dances of men and women are generally performed to the sound of bells . . ." (Colin, 1663)

Drunkenness is thus certainly the exception, not the rule, and is frowned upon as disrupting the community activity. The folk injunction is: "Ang inom ay inilalagay sa tiyan, hindi sa ulo." In the Bikol *tigsikan*, the rhymed toast, many are injunctions against excessive drinking:

I [drink a] toast to Juan
If you drink, don't drink excessively
For if you abuse
Your life will be endangered.

I drink a toast to Antonio
If you drink don't let it go to your head
For if you cause trouble
You will end up in jail.

One might also call attention to the traditional Manobo view of drinking, which, although expressed in contemporary times (by Francisco Polenda in 1989), draws from traditional tribal belief:

"If a person goes beyond his limit and drinks without restraint, he is headed for trouble. . . .

"Drinking and eating that which intoxicates also must have their limits. And these limits here stated are: drink with restraint; when you feel that you are a bit tipsy, go directly home and sleep it off. It is not necessary for a drunk person to fight, argue, murder, quarrel with his wife, cause trouble or do anything . . .

"Regarding the person who knows how to drink with self-control, we do not say that he is to be highly praised and neither do we disparage him, but rather we say that he conducts himself as he should." (Polenda, 1989)

The imbibing of alcoholic drinks, therefore, as practiced by Filipinos on ordinary workdays, or even at fiestas, although it may have looked excessive to the stranger to the culture, was and is generally social in nature, a community activity governed by mores and manners, and aimed not at individual self-indulgence but at bonding, sharing, and social confirmation. Although there were certainly excesses (Pigafetta says that "the kings ate and drank so much that they slept all day. And some, to excuse them, said that they were sick."), they were not the rule.

Fray Oliver's equating drinking with gluttony, therefore, and his linking it to wickedness and evil deeds, thoughts and words would seem an over-reaction, unless we realize that he also saw it in relation to ritual, and thus to pagan practice.

In the earliest written account of ritual, Pigafetta describes a ceremony he thought was one for "the consecration of pigs," because the principal sacrifice was a pig, as it usually is, even in contemporary *babaylan* rituals (usually a black pig). It may have actually been a rite of welcome for Magellan and his party, or for some other community event. Pigafetta noted that the priestess or *baylan* was "given a glass of wine . . . And making as if to drink the wine four or five times, she sprinkles it round the

pig's heart, then turns round immediately to dance." (Pigafetta, 1524, 89).

Guido de Lavezaris says the natives are lazy, and "spend their time in drunkenness, idolatries, and feastings" (Lavezaris, 1574, 268). Miguel de Loarca records that the sacrifices offered "in times of seed-sowing or of war" or for healing the sick start with jars of rice wine, a live hog and prepared food being brought to the place of sacrifice. (Loarca, 133) He also notes that in "the mountain districts," the people keep *anitos*, to whom are offered food, wine and gold ornaments. Sacrifice is made through a *catalonan (babaylan)*, who:

". . . offered the sacrifice, requesting from the anito whatever the people desired him to ask, and heaping up great quantities of rice, meat and fish. His invocations lasted until the demon entered his body, when the catalonan fell into a swoon, foaming at the mouth. The Indians sang, drank, and feasted until the catalonan came to himself, and told them the answer that the anito had given to him. . . . This invocation of the anito continued as long as the sickness lasted." (Loarca, 173-74)

Very old wine "consecrated to the devil," Aduarte calls it: "They are accustomed to keep this wine at the head of the bed in a little earthen jar, like holy water." (Aduarte, 86). *Quila*, he says it is called: "a wine which they make of sugarcane, and when it has aged for some years it has the color of our amber wine." (Aduarte, 243). This is probably equivalent to the Ilokano *basi*, which when young and sweet is called *basing babae*, and when aged and stronger, *basing lalake*.

Domingo Perez, O.P., in his "Relation of the Zambals," a manuscript dated 1680, describes a ritual in which a priest called *bayoc* officiates:

"The idol to whom this bayoc principally offers sacrifice is called *Malyari*, which means 'powerful.' This idol is made with a wooden head and its body and hands of straw. They dress it up like an image after their manner, place it on its altar and niche, then light for it torches of pitch . . . All the people of the rancheria assemble to make the sacrifice. Having built his altar, the bayoc takes his spear in his hand and makes three holes in the earth with it. Those holes are filled with wine, and the spear, having been thrust into the ground, the bayoc begins his sacrifice, with a leaf of wild *anahao* or wild palm in his hand. He commences to shiver,

his whole body trembling, and making many wry faces by means of his eyes, he generally talks, sometimes between his teeth, without anyone understanding him. Sometimes he contents himself with the wry faces which he makes with his eyes and the tremblings of his body. After a few minutes he strikes himself twice on the knee with the hand in which he holds the palm-leaf, and says that he is the anito to whom the sacrifice is being made. At this the sacristan (for the devil has even in this the semblance of God and wishes to resemble His Divine Majesty) explains the need of the person who orders the sacrifice made. The bayoc promises to fulfil the desire of the person who is having the sacrifice made, and immediately the bystanders begin to sing certain songs in praise of the anito or idol. While they are being sung, they give the bayoc and the sacristan something to drink, and after those two, all those present drink. But no one drinks or eats anything that has been offered in the sacrifice until the bayoc eats or drinks, for they say they would die if they ate or drank before the anito, and for the anito to eat or drink is no other thing than for the bayoc to eat or drink. . . . Finally what is offered is consumed, and when they finish eating and drinking, the sacrifice is finished . . ." (Perez, 300-302)

At a healing ritual which I witnessed in 1976 in Mandurriao, Iloilo, the *babaylan* laid out the sacrificial offerings: a black pig, later butchered and parts of it roasted, other kinds of prepared food, and a live chicken. The "wine" was a bottle of *anisado* which he drank from during the ritual (in between chanting in two languages in a seeming trance, and beating a rhythm on a porcelain bowl with a metal knife), and which he shared with us researchers (one taking photographs, the other making a tape recording). After the ritual all the food was shared with the people present.

Fr. Bartolome Artiguez, O.P., writing in 1787 from Iavana, Batanes, looks more deeply into the sacrifice:

"The souls of the dead, they say, are the anitos whom they believe are the ones who kill them, and so when they get sick they place bolos and lances at the head of the sick, and offer sacrifices and prayers for recovery. The sacrificial offerings are sometimes pigs and sometimes goats. The rites may be done publicly or privately according to necessity, or public or private good. *From this, in my opinion, comes this people's love for wine, not to say drunkenness* [italics mine]."

He explains the occasion for ritual:

"Whenever a misfortune or happy event takes place, such as sickness, death, birth, recovery from sickness, marriage and so forth, in all those and many more, all relatives and friends come together for a social function in which sacrificial offering and drunkenness mix. And if a chief throws the party, because his honor depends on his power manifested by the butchering of many pigs and goats to feed the whole village, the villagers contribute a gourdful each of a beverage brewed from sugarcane juice which they drink until they fall drunk. They set apart a portion of the food and drink and offer these to the anito. And what the *principale* do every time any fortune or misfortune comes to them, the others also do according to their own capabilities." (Artiguez, 1787, 100-101)

Fr. Artiguez sees both the habit and the occasional excesses ("De aqui en mi juicio es de donde proviene ser esta gente tan vinosa, por no decir tan ebria . . .") in context. Wine is part of the sacrifice, and must be "consumed" by both the spirit (anito) and the people. If the offering is by a rich man, there may be a lot of liquor, which must be totally consumed.

The elements of ritual are shown above to persist through the centuries: a reason for ritual (planting, battle, healing); an officiating minister *(babaylan, catalonan, bayoc)*; sacrificial offerings (black pig, food, wine); actions and words of sacrifice to the deity *(Malyari, anito)*, often in a trance-like state; and finally a gathering of people and a community sharing. The Spanish friars quite understandably called it pagan, "work of the devil," or "consecration to the devil."

They could not have seen, as more contemporary missionaries might, drawing on cultural anthropology, that it was: calling on a deity/deities for help through a mediator, by offering sacrificial gifts. In the process the minister takes the person of the deity, and the sacrifice symbolizes the supplicants, in a way analogous to what happens in the Catholic Mass. The final sharing of the food and wine by *babaylan* and people is thus a kind of Communion.

Since the terms of reference call for all the sacrificial food and drink to be consumed by those present, it could arguably go on for days, and lead to excess, and thus look like Fray Oliver's *cayamoan*. Surely it was this fear of the pagan relations of drinking that made Fray Oliver rail so strongly against drinking, and accuse the people of gluttony.

Perhaps he would have been consoled had he seen that drinking even today remains firmly a Filipino social, communal activity rather than a vehicle for sin and evil. It is governed by a folk ethic for sharing and against drunkenness, in which drinkers are enjoined to think of the others, not to disrupt the pleasure of camaraderie, and to bond with them as in the old days their forebears had bonded with the spirits of empowerment.

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Beyond Sans Rival: Exploring the French Influence on Philippine Gastronomy

Filipino cuisine as we know it today is a multi-layered expression of culture and history. It has a very obvious Malay matrix in the "native" or indigenous foods like *sinigang, pinangat* and *pinais.* It has very strong Chinese influences, as we see from everyday food like *lumpia, pansit* and *mami.* The very visible Spanish layer one sees in fiesta food like *lechon, relleno* and *morcon*; Arab and Indian traces are seen especially in the south; and the American layer is manifested in the pies, fried chicken, and sandwiches of today. Is there a French connection? a bridge to French culture, consisting perhaps of *gateau le sans rival, petits choux, meringue* and *filet mignon*?

I think not, because the sweets came to us as Spanish, through Spain (a recipe found in a cookbook prepared by American ladies in Manila in 1922 calls petits choux "Spanish Cakes"); nor do they constitute a large body or a decisive trend. Filet mignon probably came in with American steaks. My hypothesis, however, is that some French influence did come into our lives -- indirectly but definitely, and its character can be found by research into the lifestyle rather than the food.

Where does one look? The Frenchmen who travelled or lived here -- Paul de la Gironiere, Guillaume Joseph Hyacinthe Jean Baptiste Le Gentil de la Galaisiere, Jean Mallat -- commented quite extensively on the food of the natives (*sinigang*, "the aromatic paxio," etc.) but do not tell us if they taught or served their households or friends French cooking.

The Filipinos who travelled to Paris, however, absorbed French cuisine, and in some cases wrote about it. A valuable witness here is Felix Roxas, who wrote for the Spanish newspaper *El Debate* between 1926 and 1936. He had been Governor of Batangas for a

few months in 1901, Judge of the Court of First Instance and of the Court of Appeals, mayor of Manila from September 19, 1905 to January 15, 1917, and was related to the Roxases in the Ayala and Araneta lines, as well as to President Manuel Acuña Roxas. In his newspaper pieces, collected as *The World of Felix Roxas* (1970), he provides evidence that many well-to-do Filipinos travelled to Europe in 1890 to attend the Paris Exposition, the main attraction of which was the famous 300-meter Eiffel Tower; and that in 1899 there lived there "a group of respectable Filipinos composed in the majority of those who emigrated from the Philippines to escape the persecutions brought about by the revolution against Spain in 1896."

He writes of Filipinos schooling there, and vacationing in St. Jean de Luz; of the Roxas daughters who had a French governess; of the ladies he and his friends visited and wooed; of dances and dinners; and later of parties given for members of the Philippine Commission like Agoncillo, Riego de Dios, Burgos, Rivera. "I had learned," he said, "to enjoy the inner soul of Paris." And he quotes Isaac Lacson (later Senator), as saying: "He who has not stayed in Paris has not seen the world and has not lived."

He writes often about food tasted in Paris homes and restaurants, and of how exquisite and luxurious and fine it was. Although he does not speak of actually transplanting these dishes to Manila, it seems safe to assume that these Filipinos in Paris brought back at least the taste for French food and wine, and perhaps the will to have them in their homes when the ingredients, the skills and the occasions were available to them.

One source, therefore, of the French influence would be the Filipinos who lived in Europe, especially in Paris, for some time. E. Aguilar Cruz (Francophile, gourmet, painter and writer) points out that Rizal and his companions usually ate in their boarding houses to save money, contributing cash and efforts for parties, and cooking chicken and *adobo* just as Filipino graduate students abroad do today. It is recorded that Rizal was once sent out to buy champagne, and that he thought it extravagant. Vicente Soto of Cebu, nationalist editor and playwright, was quite a Francophile, addicted to restaurants, theater and the Folies Bergere. When he returned home, he is said to have kept a chef, had a menu to announce the dishes as well as the music to be played, and had wine with his meals.

Felix Roxas also mentions food and feasts in the Philippines, especially the fiesta of Sulipan, and his stay at the house of his classmate, Cayetano Arnedo, son of Capitan Joaquin Arnedo, "in a spotless room furnished with a comfortable bed, a European wash-stand, *kananga* toilet water and other colognes." There he was given "new slippers, bed-clothing, perfume, brush and soap." The dining room, he records, was "extremely luxurious: the dishware, glassware, and silverware were all French; the food was unimaginably exquisite"; the napkins were hand-embroidered, the menus "more select and exquisite . . . than the best Manila restaurants could offer: from the tiny *maya* or rice bird, deliciously seasoned, to the rarest shellfish. The most savory fruits, inimitably perfect ices, and 'syrops' were enjoyed by even the most demanding of guests." When the guests left, "a pot full of Sulipeño sweetmeats was placed among their luggage for those members of their guests' families who had not attended the Sulipan festivities."

Gene Gonzalez, Arnedo's great-grandson, tells of the chefs of the Arnedo Family, Capitan Juan Padilla and Emilio Gonzalez, who were responsible for the inaugural banquet of the First Philippine Republic on September 29, 1898. The famous "Sulipan chefs" cooked the families' banquets, daily meals, and pastries, and some of their recipes of European origin or orientation -- *Lapu-lapu al graten, Pistou Sulipan, Jamon Sulipeña,* French White Soup -- are now enshrined in Gene's own restaurants and in his cookbook, *Cocina Sulipeña*, 1993. Although Gene does not remember the family as being wine-drinkers, he says that many empty bottles of Mumm's Champagne were found under the house years later.

Solid evidence of the French-influenced lifestyle is a magnificent set of Sevres tableware (possibly for 300, the family believes, calculating from the remaining pieces), all plates and glasses monogrammed, complete with large platters for *piéces montées* and carafes for wine, gift of the Grand Duke Alexis of Russia -- and a set before that, both of which prove that the family not only used European style service, but also European style food and wine. Gene further remembers hearing family tales about the sailors on French ships (Sulipan being a port) teaching the natives from whom they brought produce, how to cook food their way. The Sulipan port and wealth were therefore both entries for the French connection into the native lifestyle.

To return to the food at the Malolos Congress and the inauguration of the Frist Philippine Republic, this is what was served:

HORS D'OEUVRE
HUITRES - CREVETTES ROSES - BEURRE -
RADIS - OLIVES - SAUCISSON DE LYON -
SARDINES AUX TOMATES - SAUMON HOLLANDAIS

COQUILLES DE CRABES	
VOL-AU-VENT	a la Financiere
ABATIS DE POULET	a la Tagale
COTELETTES DE MOUTON	a la Papillote
Pommes de Terre Paille	
DINDE TRUFFÉE	a la Manilloise
FILET	a la Chateaubriand
Haricots Verts	
JAMBON FROID	
Asperges en branche	

DESSERT
FROMAGES - FRUITS - CONFITURES
GELÉE DE FRAISES - GLACEs
VINS
BORDEAUX - SAUTERNE - XERES - CHAMPAGNE
LIQUEURS
CHARTREUSE - COGNAC
CAFE - THÉ

Although the *Abatis de Poulet a la Tagale* may well have been a Tagalog *adobong atay at balun-balunan,* and the Coquilles de Crabes a *relyenong almasag* (or *tortilla de cangrejo*) in the shell, the rest seems almost surely French.

In the years after the revolution, Filipinos who travelled abroad did not usually do so for political reasons, as had the friends and relatives of Felix Roxas. Travel was for the wealthy, and they often travelled with chefs or valets. Martin Tinio, Jr., himself an accomplished cook and a devotee of food and wine, speaks of recipes that he or his family prepare for holidays and other special occasions, and which his parents or he himself had first encountered in France. For example, there is a roast chicken from the Pyrenees

(stuffed with olives and garlic, charcoal-broiled with rosemary and thyme), and from Les Halles, oranges glazed with syrup and Cointreau. He points out that the Nakpil family's specialty, stuffed bell peppers served on the tree, represents not a Spanish, but a French verve and style of presentation. He also suggests that the *Pescado en Mayonesa* featured at legions of Philippine parties probably started out as a French (perhaps Escoffier-influenced) dish, as did the luxurious *relleno* of the Ermita Guerreros, stuffed with Oxford sausage, *pâté de foie gras,* and truffles.

The Guerreros of Ermita have been written about by two of their many famous members, Carmen Guerrero Nakpil and Wilfrido Ma. Guerrero, but anyone who knows them knows that a special family fame lies in the fields of food and drink. Leny Guerrero Joven, whose mother was French, tells of her family's paramount interest in food. Not only did her mother cook French dishes; her brother used to bake elaborate cakes to give to his girlfriends. When she opened a restaurant called Costa Brava in the 60s, one of her centerpieces was an excellent *bouillabaisse,* and another was *Pollo a la Veronica* (with grapes), which in French menus is called *Poulet Veronique.* Her mother, moreover, brought her French tastes to Filipino dishes as well, and to the pairing of foods. Her *sinigang sa pinya* for example, soured with green pineapple and *alibangbang* leaves, came with an unusual *sawsawan* of tomatoes, *bagoong,* green mango, and onions, and was paired with *inihaw na baboy.* Her *paksiw na banak* made with Paombong vinegar, was accompanied by a sawsawan of *patis, chicharron* and *wansoy.*

Martin Tinio indicates still another possible source of French influence: Spanish officialdom, and their own devotion to French as well as Spanish gastronomy. Studying the last will and testament of Governor General Aranda, he found listings such as: 72 gold platters, and silver mustard pots -- possible evidence of banquets and a lifestyle beyond the usual Spanish mold.

If the men travelled to sample the foodpots and the fleshpots, the women often travelled to study cooking, one of the few areas of study and accomplishment acceptable for and available to women in pre-feminist times. E. Aguilar (Abe) Cruz observes that in the 1920s women of San Fernando, Pampanga, were among those who went to study at the Cordon Bleu in Paris. Doña Luisa Lichauco, legendary teacher of cooking, is remembered by her pupils and descendants for dishes like *cocido, paella, ensaimadas* and *baba au*

rhum. She studied at the Fannie Farmer School of Cooking in Boston, at a School for Dietetics in the U.S. (in order to cook for her husband, who had certain ailments), and at the Cordon Bleu, from 1928-29. When she returned, she opened a school in her home, and later in another building, where she offered an eight-month course in cooking.

Mariano A. Henson of Pampanga, a lovely old man in white who came to see me in the late 60s when I first began writing a column on food, has written more than 30 publications (e.g. histories and genealogies of Pampanga), as well as a cookbook in Pampango (1968) entitled: Cusinang Capampangan, patina ding linutu nang ibat caring Americano, Castila, Frances, Intsic, Italiano, Polaco, Turco at aliwa pa, nahun qng paglasa nang sarili (Pampango cooking, including American, Spanish, French, Chinese, Italian, Polish, Turkish and other dishes, according to one's own taste).

Each recipe gives exact measurements, the price for each condiment, the total price for each dish, and the date when he tested it. Among the French recipes he obviously cooked and served to his family are: *Salmon au Gratin, Chuletas a la Papillote, Bouillavaise* [sic] *de Marsella, Oysters a la D'Uxelles, Mechadong solomillo a la Francesa, Fish au Beurre,* and *Glorified Fondue* (note the mix of spelling and languages).

The earlier cookbooks tell stories of their own. condimentos indigenas, 1918, was written by Pura Villanueva de Kalaw because she wanted to buy a billiard table for her husband, Teodoro M. Kalaw, who had not only lost his court case for "Aves de Rapiña," but had also had a leg amputated. This does not have any recipes even vaguely French; they were gathered from friends and family, and are all indeed indigenous.

Two different cookbooks, Aklat ng Pagluluto, hinango sa lalong bantog at dakilang aklat ng pagluluto sa gawing Europa at sa Filipinas, na kapuwa nasusulat sa wikang Kastila, at isinatagalog ng boong katiyagaan ni Rosendo Ignacio (Cookbook adapted from great and famous cookbooks from Europe and the Philippines, both written in Spanish, and translated to Tagalog with much diligence by Rosendo Ignacio), 1919, and Kusinang Tagalog ng aklatan at limbagan ni P. Sayo balo ni Soriano (ang aklat na ito ay naglalaman ng mga sarisari at maraming kiyas ng lutuin sa lalong madaling paraan at napakatipid na paggugugol (Tagalog cooking from the bookstore and publishing house of P. Sayo widow of Soriano [This

book contains different recipes and rapid and economical ways of cooking]), 1916, are obviously from the same source, probably translations of the very same cookbook, as an examination of the recipes and introductory portions clearly shows. Although Spanish recipes predominate, some possible French influences are visible: *Salsa holandesa, Puchero a la francesa, Cocido parisien* (French *pot-au-feu*), *Manitas de ternera en fricase, Salchichon de Lyon, Queso a la Borgoña*. They are few; they may have been adapted from French recipes and already considered Spanish, but the Gallic strains are visible.

We do, however, have a French cookbook published in Manila: Pasteleria at reposteria francesa at española, aclat na ganap naglalaman ng maraming palacad sa pag-gaua ng lahat ng mga bagay-bagay na matamis at mga pasteles ni P. R. Macosta; Isinalin sa uicang tagalog ni Crispulo Trinidad, Professor sa Latinidad (French and Spanish Pastries and Confectioneries, a book that contains many ways of cooking all sweet things and pastries), 1919. The cover features a tall mounted French piece like those in traditional classic French cookbooks, captioned: *Croquemboucheng caranuian*. The word *croquembouche* (croque-en-bouche) designates "all kinds of patisserie which crunches and crumbles in the mouth," like chestnuts, oranges or cream puffs glazed with sugar cooked to the crack stage. The recipe illustrated instructs one in the assembling of *croquignoles* (egg whites and icing sugar baked in various shapes, similar to meringues), and is called *"caranuian"* or ordinary, in contrast to *Croquembouche a la Reina*, which includes "sweet almonds ground very fine."

Among the other recipes illustrated are elaborate creations like: *Mga trufas* (truffles) *empanadas, Pastel na mainit ng faisan* (pheasant) *may casamang trufas, Pastel na mainit ng cogujadas* (crested larks) *a las finas hierbas, Timbal ng mga pichones na may trufas, Molde para sa mumunting pastel na gelatina na may codornices* (quail), *Turron a la Turca*. Although there are recipes that may conceivably have been cooked, even become popular locally, like *flan* and *buñuelos a la española*, most of the recipes are of 19th century French pastries and party pieces that have left no contemporary evidence of ever having been current. (Where would one get pheasants and crested larks?) We do not know, therefore, if anyone ever used this cookbook (many copies were and are probably still available at Libreria Martinez for P3.60 or so). The book is, however, evidence of an

interest in French cuisine strong enough to motivate the translation and printing of a cookbook.

A famous and well-used cookbook is Everyday Cookery for the Home by Sofia R. de Veyra and Ma. Paz Zamora Mascuñana (Philippine Education Co., 1930, with English and Spanish texts). It came out in the American period, when housewives were eager to learn new recipes aside from "our own cooking" (which meant Filipino and Spanish), and new techniques of home economics and nutrition. Here we find a dominance of American recipes (sandwiches, punch, waffles, muffins), but some whiffs of France: *Potato Galletes, Sopa "comptesse," Sopa "creme Clamart," Homard a la Newberg, salmon al gratin, Filet de veau vienoise, relleno para el petit chous.*

Nowhere in sight, by the way, is the *gateau le sans rival.*

Thus French dishes and cooking styles came into the country through Filipinos living and travelling abroad, Filipinas studying in European cooking schools, Frenchmen/women marrying and/or living in the Philippines, and more recently French restaurants, menus and chefs, books on cooking and wine. No French dishes can be said to have become part of, adapted and indigenized into, our cuisine, as have *paella, morcon, relleno, puchero;* and *lumpia, siomai, camaron rebozado;* and hamburgers, hot dogs and sandwiches.

It seems that, as E. Aguilar Cruz says, "French influence is to be found in the high regard for everything French in food and drink among Filipinos of a certain cultural (social) level. They indulge their taste for French food and drink in restaurants. Their own pantries are not equipped to cater to their preferences for such items."

In other words, the French influence is not on our cooking, our dishes, our daily bread, but on gastronomy -- the art or science of good eating, the aspiration to or passion for epicurism. French cuisine has become the standard, and anyone seriously interested in good food strives to learn about, experience, and taste it. In the 60s came the first really French restaurant, Au Bon Vivant. Abe Cruz says that there was a Restaurant de Paris near the Ideal Theater early in the century, but he doubts if it was really focused on Frertch food (maybe just on Paris?). Au Bon Vivant was, and so were later restaurants and dining rooms in the 5-star hotels, like the Mandarin's late L'Hirondelle, and now the Shangri-la's Cheval Blanc.

Although Filipinos learned to drink wine in the Spanish colonial period, this was usually *vino tinto, rioja* and *jerez,* and the brands that became familiar were Diamante, Valdepeñas, Marques de Riscal. Abe Cruz points out that these were drunk throughout the meal, or during a *tertulia* with little sweetmeats, sort of the way beer is drunk today, and not as the French drink wine, pointedly pairing it with dishes for reasons of appropriateness. Today many epicures and would-be gourmets have learned to drink wine -- by studying or travelling abroad, by reading and tasting -- and some even keep wine cellars. There are societies and associations like the Chaine des Rotisseurs, the Wine Society, the Cheese Society; there are columns in the papers on wine-tasting.

The French connection, therefore, does not run in our veins, as the Spanish and Chinese connections do. We did not absorb it and make it ours; perhaps it did not fit with our Malay tastebuds, or did not stay long enough to be adapted and adopted. It lives, however, in standards aspired for -- in the ideal, so to speak. It still remains to be seen if *coq au vin* and *soupe a l'oignon* can become Pinoy.

But the French ideal remains and grows. Today every *matakaw* wants to be called a gourmet, even while real gourmets (and there are Filipino gourmets) humbly call themselves learners or Francophiles, acknowledging that they love, but have a lot to learn. Today French food is served by some housewives, by some caterers, and of course by the young chefs (male and female) trained in the hotels and culinary institutes abroad. Our French-speaking former President Corazon Aquino served French meals as well as Filipino meals in Malacañang, and today our gastronomic vocabulary extends far beyond *petits choux* and *sans rival.*

Colonizing the Cuisine: The Politics of Philippine Foodways

Philippine foodways have been difficult even for Filipinos to understand, so variegated are they, coming as they do from different cultural strains. Many consider the national dish to be *adobo*, which may have been derived from the Mexican *adobado*, or at the very least named after it. Others would say that the great common dish would be *pansit*, since it is found at feasts and family dinners, in restaurants and on roadside pushcarts. This is, however, clearly derived from Chinese noodles, although indigenized in various ways.

The difficulty increases when one sees these foodways reflected in current restaurants (the five-star hotels have token Filipino dishes on their menus), in cookbooks, in the media, and indeed in urban areas. Seemingly most prominent are dishes with Spanish *(paella, lengua estofada)* and American (fried chicken, fruit salad) names, food for feasting and entertaining. Where is the indigenous, homegrown, day-to-day cuisine?

Philippine foodways clearly reflect Philippine history: the foreign influences being indigenized into a changing culture. An exploration of these patterns will obviously provide a key to the understanding of national identity. The study of food as culture within the context of colonization leads to an understanding of the fate of the local culture under the hegemony of the dominant cultures of the colonizers.

The Geography. These foodways evolved in an archipelago of some 7,107 islands forming part of the great island arc off the southeastern coast of the Asian mainland, part of island Southeast Asia. The islands are scattered over some 500,000 square miles (1,295,000 sq. km.) of oceanic water, and together, this string comprises a total land area of 115,380 square miles (300,000 sq. km.). The archipelagic formation of the national territory gives the Philippines the longest discontinuous coastline in the world, estimated at 10,580 statute miles (17,462 km.) or about twice as long as that of the United States.

The boundaries of the archipelago are formed by three large bodies of water: on the west and north by the South China Sea; on the east by the Pacific Ocean; and on the south by the Celebes Sea and the coastal waters of Borneo. The northernmost island, Y'ami, is 65 miles (105 km.) southeast of Taiwan, while the southernmost island, Saluag, is 30 miles (48 km.) east of Borneo.

This unique geographic position on the oceanic margins of Southeast Asia has made it possible for the Philippines, far more than its neighbors in Southeast Asia and the Pacific, to "drink from the fount of three physical and cultural worlds: the Asian, the Pacific, and the Occidental."

This it has certainly done, not only because of its geographic circumstances, but also because of its colonial history.

The Culture and the People. The 80 or more ethno-linguistic groups in the Philippines make for a variegated culture, or more accurately a gathering of related yet different ethnic cultures. Since all these peoples live on the same land, and draw sustenance from the same landscape, their foodways have similarities. Leyteños, for example, grate the large tuber called *talyan*, as the Badjaws of Tawi-tawi grate and squeeze cassava roots into *panggi kayu*, and the Butuanon make the pith of the sago palm into the flour called *unaw* – to make different but similar foods.

To keep fish without refrigeration, the Tagalogs cook it in vinegar and garlic to make *paksiw;* the Ilonggos then allow the vinegar to evaporate to make the dry *pinamalhan;* while the Cebuanos leave a minimum of liquid in their *inon-unan*. Many communities conduct rituals or celebrate with wines made from: rice *(tapuy, baya)*, sugarcane *(basi)*, coconut sap *(tuba, lambanog)*, nipa sap *(laksoy)*. Almost all who have access to water have similar methods of salting / sun-drying / preserving fish when it is plentiful. Almost all have some kind of sour stew *(sinigang, tinola)* that keeps well, and refreshes in hot weather.

The Chinese who stopped at various points in the islands to trade, sometimes staying to wait for barter goods or for payment,

eventually marrying and settling, brought a culinary influence to almost all islands and groups. The omnipresence of the noodle, or *pansit*, is evidence of an input into the culture that spread and became a commonality rather than an intrusion.

Christianization brought even greater similarities to the ethnic cultures now called "lowland Christian": the Cebuano, Pampango, Tagalog, Ilonggo, Waray, Pangasinan, Bicolano and Ilocano cultures. To the native foodways was added a Christian ethos: foods for fasting and abstinence were separate from food for feasting. The fish that is the basic and favorite viand of Filipinos (being the most available and the most varied) became, puzzlingly, a "penitential" food acceptable for Lenten Fridays while meat, always something special (expensive) or seasonal (from the hunt) was not.

The coming of Islam in the 14th century similarly harmonized foodways in such cultures as the Taosug, Maguindanao, and Maranaw. The rules of Ramadan, for example, in which rigid fasting is practiced during the daytime for the 28 days of the holy month, make the breaking of the fast after sundown, and the ending of Ramadan, special occasions for which there are light foods (including fruit) to ease the breaking, then a heavier meal after prayer, and another before sunrise, then celebratory meals at the end of the season.

Just as Spanish colonization brought in Hispanic ways with food (fasting, feasting) as well as actual dishes, cooking methods, and food values, so did American colonization bring in other dishes, methods of cooking and preserving, and behavioral and attitudinal patterns. Hispanization occurred mainly among the lowland groups most reachable to Spanish officials and friars. Americanization, however, reached into almost all ethnic groups, because it journeyed into the cultures through the educational system and through popular culture -- the magazines, movies, songs, comics, newspapers, cookbooks, advertisements, etc. that rendered the 46 years of American rule (1900-1946) vastly more impactful on daily lifeways than the almost 400 of Spanish domination (1521-1898).

Philippine Foodways

When one asks today, therefore: What is Philippine food? The answer can be neither brief nor simple.

Malay. The indigenous food, that which existed before Chinese, Indian/Arab, Spanish/Mexican, or American contact, is that born of the Malay cultural matrix. This is food similar to that of the rest of mainland and island Southeast Asia, using the vegetables, fish, meats, spices, and condiments from the landscape.

This is food to which rice is central, not only as basic cereal, but also as shaper of tastes. The very spicy, sour, or salty are possible and desirable because they are eaten against the bland background of steamed rice. Because it can be sweetened as well, rice is basic to the cakes and sweets of everyday, as well as those of feasts, Christian or pre-Christian, Islamic or pre-Islamic.

This is also food to which the coconut, which has been called "the dietary constant of the Pacific," is important. In the Philippines it provides leaves for shelter, decoration, toys, and the wrapping of multitudinous rice-cakes. The nut is food source when young or mature, raw or cooked, its sap distilled into liquor or its flesh squeezed for milk. The tree dies to give up its heart *(ubod)* for the *lumpiang ubod* of many regions.

The dishes from this tradition are, in general, simply cooked: steamed, boiled, roasted on coal, simmered in vinegar -- as befits food taken from the immediate surroundings and not transported long distances. Among the most typical and widespread are *sinigang* and *kinilaw*.

Sinigang is meat, fish or seafood stewed in a sour broth with vegetables. It makes use of almost any product of the food landscape, in many combinations, and can be soured with tamarind, green mango, green pineapple, guava, or any of the sour tropical fruits or leaves of the regions. In the Visayas it becomes *tinola*, the broth soured only by tomatoes, yet throughout the principle is the same: souring, because sour broths are cooling in tropical climates, and also make food keep without refrigeration; and flexibility, because fish, game, vegetables, and condiments are seasonal and combinable, and no rigid recipe is possible.

Kinilaw has uncooked fish, shellfish, crustaceans or meat marinated in vinegar or lime juice and thus "cooked" (transformed from the raw state) by the acid, without fire. It is a dish that capitalizes on the freshness of the marine and riverine life that flourishes around and within 7000 islands surrounded by seas and threaded by brooks, streams, canals, flooded ricefields and rivers. It is based on the local wisdom that knows such food should be

cooked as little as possible or not at all. In Bantayan, fishermen at sea strip the skin off fish just caught, then the flesh off the bones, and dip this in the salt sea before eating. When on land, they use coconut vinegar. In Dipolog and other parts of Mindanao it is sprinkled with grated *tabun-tabun*, a fruit that adds a welcome touch of bitterness, as well as protection against stomach upsets. In Bohol the vari-colored flesh of scallops (not just the white button) is pried from shells right on the pier, sprinkled with vinegar, onions, ginger and chili, and eaten with boiled *camote* and *tuba*. In this dish is age-old praxis, as well as a philosophy of freshness.

This indigenous food takes many forms in the many regions: Bicolanos stew in coconut milk and spice with chili; those from Laguna create with young coconut, even making noodles of it; Ilocanos austerely cook vegetable combinations in *bagoong*. Maranaws make much use of yellow ginger (turmeric) and grated coconut. This is simple, healthy "lean cuisine" -- high in fiber and carbohydrates, low in protein and fat, nutritionists point out -- that depends on the landscape and its natural cycles, discovers its wealth and its flavors.

Foreign Influences. Filipino food naturally changed and expanded in its interaction with foreign food. The Chinese, who have been trading with the Philippines since the 11th, and probably even as early as the 9th century, brought in culinary influences so early in our history that few Filipinos recognize them now as anything but native. Among the Chinese contributions to Philippine cuisine are: the use of soybeans in the making of sauces *(toyo, miso)* and curds *(tokwa, tahure)*; certain pork and beef cuts for which there still are no native names *(liempo, kamto)*; and many dishes now deeply entrenched in homes, markets, and restaurants, like noodles (*pansit* if sautéed, *mami* if with broth, *bihon* if made from rice, *sotanghon* if made from mung bean, etc.), springrolls *(lumpia)*, filled buns *(siopao)*, dumplings *(siomai)* and crullers *(bicho-bicho)*. Cooking with oil in a *wok (kawali)* also came in with Chinese stir-frying.

The Spanish influence entered from a position of ascendance; the food of the colonizer was deemed superior, urbane, "civilizing," greatly to be desired, even though expensive and rich. Unlike Chinese food, Spanish food became mainly fiesta food. The stuffed capons *(relleno)* and beef rolls *(morcon, mechado)*; the stews of meats,

sausages and vegetables *(cocido, pochero)*; and the rich desserts *(leche flan, brazo de Mercedes, sans rival)* with ingredients and combinations richly beyond Filipino patterns and budgets, are today the food for family reunions, Christmas, entertaining important guests, and feasts.

The American influence, which incliudes foods of speed and convenience (frozen, pressure-cooked), foods portable (sandwiches) and quick (fast food), came not only through American families and restaurants, but also through the educational system that promoted hygienic and scientific foodways, and certainly through the lifestyles portrayed in magazines, movies, and newspapers. The impact of this keeps growing in the young, who find American snacks easier to fit into faster lifestyles (and into backpacks), more contemporary and less *"baduy"* (provincial, out of fashion) -- one grabs a burger for lunch rather than *paksiw* and rice.

The global influence drifts in through travel, new restaurants, and media, such that pizza and *sukiyaki*, Mongolian barbecue and roast beef are now part of the Philipine gastronomic lexicon.

And if one asks: What then is Filipino food? One must answer: all of the above. The assimilation of these foods has not, however, been slavish. Always, it has involved indigenization, in which the tastes are adjusted to the Filipino palate. Long-ago noodles brought in by Chinese traders, for example, when cooked with Filipino ingredients, and then adjusted to local tastes by their Filipino wives, became *pansit*. The Chinese *batsui* ("pork and water") is now the Ilonggo *bachoy*, with pork lights, broth, egg noodles, and a sprinkling of toasted garlic and chopped scallions. The Spanish *paella* became Pinoy via a native edition in sticky rice, chicken, and coconut milk. The most popular burger chain in Manila is not McDonald's but Jollibee, whose hamburger is filled with chopped onions like the nativized *bistek*, and whose repertoire includes *pancit palabok* in a styrofoam container. Pizzas with local sausages and carabao cheese have evolved as well (Pizza Pampanga).

It is the indigenous cuisine that has stood steadfast and unchanged even in the onslaught of foreign tastes. It has been the guardian and the standard of local gastronomy, the food of tradition and memory. Its relishes and dipping sauces *(sawsawan)* are still used by many to tune the foreign taste to the local tongue (e.g. sprinkling Spanish *cocido* with *patis;* marinating chicken in vinegar and garlic before shaking in flour and frying Southern style). The foreign food is adjusted to the local taste, and not vice-versa.

The Politics of Philippine Foodways

The current foodways situation presents interesting political dynamics. Highest in prestige, and with the most social clout, is the colonial food. Hispanic is the food of feasting and of the elite. Spanish is the language of traditional Christmas food: *pavo embuchado, pollo rellenado, jamon en funda, cocido, ensaimada y chocolate, castañas.* The desire to have Christmas "as in the old days . . . in peacetime . . . before the war" includes a wish for *turrones de Jijona* or *turrones de Alicante,* and all the apples, oranges, grapes, and walnuts that defined the Christmas feast acquired with Spanish Christianization and colonization. The American contribution is almost as prominent: baked ham, roast turkey, fruit cakes.

In the media, especially on television, the American food presence, although perhaps lower in prestige than the Spanish (imaged as "tradition") is even stronger. The zippy, mouth-watering advertisements for McDonald's, Kentucky Fried Chicken, soft drinks, liquor, sandwiches, salads, snacks, ice cream, and various other imported food products, assert a high profile and exert a high pressure, especially on the young. The food products of local companies as well, are usually in the American style: ice cream bars, packaged fruit drinks in tetrapaks, beer, soft drinks. If one were to draw a picture of Philippine foodways solely from what is projected on television, it would definitely have an American face, or at the very least strong American features. This would suggest that American food did not only enter the food scene in the colonial period (through education and popular culture), but was affirmed and strengthened by the neocolonization of the economy and the attendant media.

In the restaurants, again it is the Spanish / American / continental features of Philippine foodways that are projected. The coffee shops and main dining rooms of five-star hotels have "continental" menus, with occasionally a token native dish -- usually *adobo* -- and local fishes listed by their native names, perhaps for exoticism *(lapu-lapu, tanguingue)* -- but cooked in foreign or standard ways -- *meuniere, amandine,* with lemon-butter sauce. It is only in the last two decades, in fact, that there have been any Filipino restaurants at all at the "tablecloth" or "fine dining" level. Previously, local food was found only at *pondohan, carinderia* and *turo-turo* in markets and along waysides -- not places to take guests

to, because they are informal, quite casual about sanitation and decor, with humble furnishings, and with food inferior to that served in homes. Guests were taken to have steaks or *paella,* not *sinigang* and *laing.*

The menu for the inauguration of the First Philippine Republic in 1898 was French (Coquilles de Crabes, Vol-au-vent a la Financiere, Abatis de Poulet a la Tagale, Dinde Truffee a la Manilloise, Filet a la Chateaubriand, Jambon Froid), although Abatis de Poulet a la Tagale may well have been *adobong atay at balunbalunan.* Needless to say, most state dinners at Malacañang Palace in all the presidencies since independence have not usually been Filipino, except for token dishes and rare occasions.

If the position of prominence at fiestas, upscale restaurants, state dinners, and the media constitutes power, then one could conclude that in the culinary power-play, colonial food has won out, Philippine cuisine has been colonized and neocolonized, with the native cuisine relegated to a position of inferiority in the background.

This was the position I held for some time, as I lamented the cultural amnesia, the cultural loss that I saw occurring in the primate city, Manila. I saw young people not remembering or caring about provincial cooking, about chickens caged and fattened for the fiesta, and prepared by country cooks through long slow simmering or steaming. I saw cheap restaurants taking unconscionable shortcuts (peanut butter for the roasted ground peanuts in *kare-kare,* soy sauce to darken *adobo* quickly; baking powder and wheat flour or mixes to replace hand-ground rice flour in *bibingkang galapong*).

After the field research that Edilberto N. Alegre and I conducted for our books, however, a different picture was revealed. First of all, the majority of Filipinos do not eat Hispanic or Americanized food. They eat the native, indigenous, Malay food of their ancestors. The markets -- both permanent and evanescent -- are filled with live Bisaya chickens, not poultry-bred or hormone-fed White Leghorns. Baguio celery, carrots, and lettuce are rare, perhaps unaffordable, and so the markets teem with small native eggplants and bittermelons, feathery bunches of fern in season, or such hardy perennials as *kangkong* (swamp cabbage) and *malunggay* (horseradish tree leaves). Herbs strange to us (who know more about parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme) were pointed out as being for particular dishes or to accompany the right fish,

fowl, or meat. Some vegetable mixes were sold together in piles or bags, because they were for particular dishes (the Waray *lawot-lawot*, the Ilonggo *laswa*). Some popular foods had pop names ("fluorescent" were tubes of banana trunk pith), even risqué ones. Fishes we'd never seen in the cities, meats (like carabao) favored over the standard, shellfish of every persuasion, *bagoong* in profuse variety -- all were laid out to assure us that the downhome native cuisine was alive and well, growing and flourishing in the provinces.

On the provincial restaurant scene, Hispanic, American or "continental" cooking is rare, except in the larger and more prosperous cities (Cebu, Davao, Bacolod). There might be fried chicken (the two best restaurants in Dipolog boast fried chicken as a specialty), and such Spanish-derived dishes as *menudo* and *lengua*, but they are usually thoroughly indigenized and quite distant from the Spanish originals. Among Bicolanos, the name *cocido* is no longer attached to a Spanish stew, but to *sinigang*.

Chinese-derived dishes there are, aplenty, and also Chinese *pansiterias* (of the type that in colonial times had Spanish names — e.g. *camaron rebozado* -- for dishes called *comida China*). As mentioned earlier, the Chinese influence has been assimiliated over such a long period that it is considered native by most Filipinos.

Provincial eating places include a few modest restaurants serving local food (sourcing and supply are a major factor; so are taste and cost) and a galaxy of *carinderia, pondohan,* and *turo-turo* in markets, bus terminals, jeep and taxi stops, low-income residential areas; on roadsides and sidewalks, at barangay and barrio streetcorners. They feed the traveller, the stevedore, the industrial or construction worker, the low-salaried employee, the market vendor or shopper, the schoolchild.

Although the fare in these food centers may sound a few colonial notes -- beef *caldereta*, chicken-pork *adobo*, fish *escabeche*, macaroni salad -- the major dishes, the popular choices, the standard fare we met in Tagalog, Waray, Cebuano, Ilocano, Bicol, Pangasinan, Pampango carinderias were indigenous: *sinigang, tinola, kinilaw, pinakbet, dinuguan, gulay, paksiw, inihaw, nilaga*, etc.

There is, moreover, considerable internal migration anod therefore inter-regional interaction and movement. In Valencia, Bukidnon, which had turned from growing corn to producing sugar, Ilonggos, Cebuanos, Ilocanos, Pampangos, etc. coexist in the

workplace and in the foodplace, their dishes jostling and influencing each other. In Bicol, the Ilocano *pinakbet* has acquired an addendum of coconut milk; in Tacloban local restaurants have learned to add *kare-kare* to their repertoire. In Cebu are offered both the sour Tagalog *sinigang* and the gentler Visayan *tinola*.

The vigor of the indigenous cuisine is visible and undeniable. It is unembarrassed, and in fact proud of its commonalities and differences: *asosena* or dog meat where it is legal; goat meat wherever there are Ilocanos; sea urchin eggs raw when the source is near, salted as *bagoong* when the supply is high; baby eels on skewers in a Capiz market; dried manta ray for *pulutan* in Tagbilaran; mole crickets in Pampanga and locusts in Negros; high chili registers in Bicol, Kalinga, and Marawi, but not elsewhere.

The indigenous cuisine wins out in the power play if the criteria are geographical spread and breadth of market. Native food feeds more people in more areas of the Philippines than does the colonial cuisine -- because it is what the majority can afford. It is also the food most plentiful and readily available. It does not require prestige or media exposure to win its patrons. They are hooked on its flavors, which are ingrained in their consciousness and attuned to their budgets.

In the politics of foodways, therefore, where is the power? Is it in social level, media projection, and international exposure? Or is it in the size and spread of patronage?

Which will get the media coverage and the international exposure? The colonial cuisine, certainly. Which will get the updated technology, the advertising hype and budget, and the patronage of the urban upscale (young and yuppie) market? Almost certainly the neocolonial (American) cuisine.

Yet it is the indigenous cuisine which will steadily supply the town and city markets, the village *tabu*, the tables of the peasants, the poor, and the lower middle class who constitute 90% of the Philipine population. It is the indigenous cuisine that will not get much updated technology, standardization of sourcing, or stabilization of supply routes. Native food will not get written up in too many coobooks and magazines, or featured on television. But these uncolonized foodways will steadily confirm the culture, provide documentation of what is Filipino for generations of anthropologists and researchers (whose tribe increases), and assert the national identity.

In the long grind, the power belongs to the lowly. This is staying power and assertive power, although it has little flash and projection.

In urban Metro Manila and in Cebu, and eventually in such cities as Baguio (after post-earthquake reconstruction) and Davao, a colonized cuisine will have high visibility alongside the colonized culture of high-rises, corporate centers, English language daily newspapers and television, five-star hotels and tourist facilities. In the 66 provinces and their cities, towns, barrios, and barangays; among their people surviving on farms, in small enterprises, in industries, in the catch-as-catch-can arrangements of the underground economy, the indigenous cuisine and culture will prevail -- too slowly documented, studied and updated, perhaps, but surviving along with the people.

This cuisine persists, despite past and continuing efforts, seemingly little affected by colonization and neocolonization, either unchanged in its traditional ways (indigenous), or slightly changed in its contact with the dominant culture (through the indigenization of foreign influences). The same phenomenon is discernible in the vernacular languages, which survive despite borrowings and the ascendance of Spanish then English in official and prestige usage.

Its vigor augurs well, and offers much hope for the folklore, the folkways, the folk art and the folk culture which many have feared are too fragile to survive modernity and global tides. This, as Alegre has put it, is the "revenge of the local."

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Glossary

A

Achara – sweet vegetable pickle, e.g. green papaya, radish, etc.

Achuete – *Biva orellana,* annatto seed

Adobo – a dish of meat, seafood or vegetables cooked in vinegar and spices; **adobong atay at balunbalun** – liver and gizzard adobo

Ala-ala – remembrance

Alagaw – *Premna odorata blanco,* a small tree with medicinal aromatic leaves, also used for cooking

Alamang – small shrimps, often made into *bagoong*

Alibangbang – butterfly-shaped leaves used for flavoring meat and fish

Alimango – crab

Alimusan – (Ilongo) sea catfish

Almejas – (Spanish) clams

Alugbate – *Basella rubra,* Malabar nightshade; Ceylon spinach

Alumahan – *Restreliger kanagurta,* Indian mackerel

Alupihang dagat – mantis shrimp

Ampalaya – *Momordica balsamina,* bittermelon

Ampaw – puffed rice

Anak – child

Andas – a platform on which a saint's statue is carried

Apritada – a dish of fish or meat cooked with tomatoes, green/red pepper, potatoes, etc.

Apo – grandchild

Arbularyo – from *herbolario*, herb-healer

Arroz caldo – a rice gruel with chicken, ginger, *kasubha*, sliced scallions and toasted garlic

Asado – roasted in an oven

Aves de Rapiña – birds of prey; referring to a famous editorial of that title, published in the early American period

Awit – a metrical romance

Ayungin – *Therapon plumbeus*, silver perch

B

Baboy – pig; pork

Baboy damo – wild boar

Bacalao – codfish; dried codfish

Bachoy – a dish of internal organs cooked in broth, with or without noodles

Bagoong – salted and fermented fish or shrimp sauce

Bahay itlog – egg sac

Bakawan – *Rhizophora mucronata/apulata*, a species of mangrove tree

Bakya – wooden shoes, clogs

Balimbing – star fruit, carambola, a fruit native to Malaysia

Balintawak – a female costume of *saya*, *baro*, and *alampay* (long skirt, butterfly sleeves, and scarf)

Balut – a fertilized duck egg with an embryo within

Banadas – biscuits topped with a white sugar glaze

Banak – Family *Mugilidae*, mullet

Banca, bangka – native boat with or without a sail; fishing boat

Banga – a clay water container with a spigot

Bangus – *Chanos chanos*, milkfish

Barangay – the smallest political unit; a small village

Barilis – (Bisayan) *Neothunnus macropterus*, yellowfin tuna

Barkada – colloquial for gang, friends

Basi – an alcoholic drink made from sugarcane juice

Batidor – a wooden beater for beating chocolate to a froth

Batuan – a hard green fruit with a single seed, used for souring

Bayawak – monitor lizard

Baybay – (Ilonggo) seashore, beach

Baye-baye – Ilonggo rice cake of *pinipig* and coconut

Bayong – a woven market bag

Belen – Bethlehem; a creche or Nativity scene

Bibingka – a cake of rice flour, baked, often with native cottage cheese and a bit of salted egg on top

Bicho-bicho – a fried cruller of Chinese origin

Bignay – a dark berry used to make jam and wine

Bihon – rice noodle

Bihud – roe; fish eggs

Biko – a rice cake, usually molded on a plate

Binacol, binakol – Ilonggo dish of chicken cooked with young coconut

Binagoongang baboy – pork cooked with *bagoong*

Bindonggo – (Ilonggo) tripe

Biscocho, bizcocho – biscuit, hard tack

Bistek – beefsteak; a dish of sliced beef cooked with onions

Bituka – intestines

Biya – *Gobius juris*, flathead goby

Biyaya – gift, blessing; **biyaya ng lupa** – the earth's blessing

Bopis – a dish of beef lungs, heart, liver, etc.

Bringhe – a dish of glutinous rice cooked with chicken and coconut milk

Buan-buan, buwan-buwan – *Megalops cyprinoides*, tarpon

Buchi, butsi – a ball of dough stuffed with bean paste, rolled in sesame seeds and fried

Bukayo – coconut candy

Buko – young coconut

Bulalo – the kneecap; a stew made of boiling this and other meats with vegetables

Bulao, bulaw – (Ilonggo) *Selar crumenophthalmus*, big-eyed scad

Bunuelos – (Spanish) wind puff, a pastry served with syrup

Buntot – tail; oxtail

Burnay – an earthenware jar made in the Ilocos

Buro – preserved, fermented, e.g. **mangga**/mango, **hipon**/shrimp, **dalag** or **hito** or **kanduli**/fish

But-ong – an Ilonggo snack made of coconut

Butong-butong – (Ilonggo) a type of pulled taffy; *tira-tira*

C

Cabeza de jabali – (Spanish) boar's head; head cheese

Cadena de amor – literally "chain of love"; a vine bearing small pink or white flowers

Calamares – (Spanish) squid

Caldereta, kaldereta – a stew of goatmeat or beef with olives and bell peppers

Callos – tripe

Camachile, kamatsile – a tree with pods bearing seeds surrounded by an edible whitish pulp

Camaron rebozado – batter-fried shrimps; the term is Spanish, the dish Chinese

Carajay, karahay, karaha – a wok-shaped pan, usually of metal

Carinderia – a food stall consisting of filled kettles/pots lined up on a table

Carrosa – the carriage on which a saint's statue is borne in procession

Castanas – (Spanish) chestnut

Castillo – castle; a castle of sweets or creampuffs

Champuy – Chinese strawberry; bay berry

Chicharo – snow pea

Chicharron – pork crackling, of skin, or skin-and-flesh

Chocolatera – a pot for cooking chocolate

Chorizo – (Spanish) sausage; **Chorizo Macao** – Chinese sausage

Churros – (Spanish) fluted crullers, usually eaten with chocolate

Colegiala – student in a convent school

Comida China – (Spanish) Chinese food

Corrido – a metrical romance

Cuchinta, kutsinta – a brown soft rice cake made with lye

D

Dahong sili – leaves of the chili pepper plant

Dalag – *Ophicephalus striatus*, freshwater mudfish, murrel

Danggit – family *Teuthidae;* siganid

Dayap – lime

Dilaw, dilao – yellow ginger, turmeric

Dinuguan – a stew of blood and meats / variety meats

Duhat – Java plum

Dulce gatas – (Ilonggo) milk candy

Duyan – hammock

E

Embutido – a ground pork roll

Empanada – a meat-filled pasty

Ensaimada, ensaymada – a sugared, buttered roll

Ensalada – salad; in Negros, a drink of coconut water, fruits and heart of palm

Escabeche – (Spanish) fish fried then cooked with vinegar, garlic, onions and ginger

Escaparate – showcase in a store

Espeso – thick, referring to chocolate

Estofada – stewed; usually used to refer to oxtongue

Estrellado – fried egg

F

Fabada – a Spanish dish of beans and meats

Fiambrera – a layered metal food container

G

Gado-gado – (Indonesian) mixed vegetables with a peanut sauce

Galantina – a stuffed, steamed chicken, usually served cold

Galapong – rice flour

Galleta – a thin biscuit

Gambas – (Spanish) shrimps; **gambas al ajillo**, cooked in garlic

Garapinera – an ice cream making hand-cranked machine

Garbansos – chickpeas

Gata – coconut milk

Gilingan – grinder; a rice grinder

Ginataan – cooked with coconut milk

Goto – tripe; also a rice-tripe gruel

Guinamus – (Ilonggo) *bagoong;* salted fermented fish/shrimp sauce

Guinomis, guinumis – pinipig, gelatin, etc. in a tall glass served with crushed ice and coconut milk

Guisado – sautéed

Gulay – vegetable, a vegetable dish

Gurgurya – a crisp fried snack of starch, eggs, sugar

H

Haleang ube – a dessert made of purple yam cooked with milk and sugar

Halo-halo – a snack of mixed sweetened fruits and beans topped by shaved or crushed ice, and ice cream or milk

Haplos – to wipe a liquid on the body, as for a massage

Hebe – dried shrimps

Higante – giant; esp. the papier mache giants made for fiestas

Hilaw – raw, uncooked, unripe

Hito – *Clarias betrachus,* freshwater catfish

Hojaldres – thin, delicate biscuits

Hubad – unclothed; unwrapped

I

Ibus – (Ilonggo) a rice caked wound with coconut fronds

Ihaw – to roast on coals; **ihaw-ihaw** – a place serving grilled food

Ihip – to blow; a bamboo blow tube

Inasal – spit-roasted; **inasal nga manok** – spit-roasted chicken

Inihaw – roasted on coals

Interna – boarder; boarding student

Ispading – (Ilonggo) the knife used for cutting sugarcane

Itik – duck; duckling

Itlog – egg; **na maalat / na pula** – salted egg

J

Jamon – ham; *en dulce,* with a sugared rind; *china,* Chinese; *en funda,* wrapped in a cloth sack

K

Kababaryo – fellow villager

Kababayan – countryman

Kabuti – mushroom; **kabuting kidlat** – a mushroom that appears after lightning or a thunderstorm

Kakanin – snacks, often consisting of rice cakes and sweetmeats

Kalabaw – carabao, water buffalo; also a variety of mango

Kalkag – (Ilonggo) dried shrimps

Kamaru – mole cricket

Kambingan – an eatery that serves goat *(kambing)*

Kamias, kamyas – *Averrhoa bijimbi,* an acidic fruit used for souring

Kamoteng kahoy – cassava, manioc

Kamto – beef flank

Kanduli – *Arius Manilensis,* sea catfish

Kanin – cooked rice; also to eat

Kangkong – swamp cabbage

Kare-kare – a stew of oxtail, tripe, etc. and vegetables with a sauce thickened with ground roasted rice and peanuts

Kaong – the seeds of the sugar palm tree

Kasim – picnic (pork cut); lean pork

Kaskas – scraped or shaved, as in ice for *halo-halo*

Kasubha – a plant, the dried stigmas of which are used for coloring and flavoring food; a kind of saffron

Katsa, kacha – unbleached muslin

Kawa – a vat used for cooking in quantity

Kenchi – shinbone, the meat and marrow-filled bone thereof

Kesong puti – white carabao milk cheese; native cottage cheese

Kinamunsil – (Ilonggo) a cookie shaped like *camachile/kamunsil*

Kinilaw, kilawin – a dish of uncooked fish or shellfish dressed with vinegar and other condiments

Kondol, kundol – wintermelon

Kumpare, compadre – the godfather of one's child, or the father of one's godson/goddaughter

L

Laing – a Bicol dish of taro/gabi leaves and coconut milk

Laksoy – a liquor of distilled nipa palm sap

Lambanog – a liquor of distilled coconut sap

Langka, nangka – jackfruit

Langsa – fishy smell; metallic smell

Lapu-lapu – *Epinephelus corallicola*, spotted grouper; sea bass

Lechon – spit-roasted pig; **lechon de leche** – roasted suckling pig

Lechon kawali, litsong kawali – skillet- or oven-roasted pork

Lechon manok, litsong manok – spit-roasted chicken, usually stuffed with aromatic leaves

Lengua – tongue; usually ox tongue

Liempo, liyempo – pork belly

Llanera – a metal mold for *leche flan* (milk custard)

Lomi – a wide flat Chinese noodle; a dish of this with broth

Longganisa, longaniza, langonisa – pork sausage, sweetish *(hamonado, de hamon)* or spicy *(de recado)*

Longsilog – longganisa, sinangag, itlog; sausage with egg and fried rice, a breakfast dish

Lumpia – spring roll

Lutong bahay – home cooking

M

Maasim – sour

Macapuno – sport coconut; a variety in which the central cavity is filled with flesh instead of coconut water

Magtutuba – one who gathers coconut sap for tuba

Malagkit – sticky; also the term for glutinous rice

Malapot – thick, viscous

Malata – soft and flabby

Mala-uhog – very young coconut; literally "like snot"

Malinamnam – succulent, luscious

Malunggay – leaves of the horseradish tree

Mami – a dish of chicken or beef with noodles and broth

Manibalang – almost ripe, fruit soft yet firm and crunchy

Manok – chicken

Manukan – an eating place serving chicken

Masa – the masses; also to knead

Matanda – old; in the old style

Maybahay – the owners of the house

Mechado – beef with lardoons

Media noche – the middle of the night; also the meal eaten on Christmas eve

Menudo – a dish of pork and liver cubes cooked with potatoes and carrots

Merienda – a mid-afternoon or mid-morning snack

Miki – wheat flour noodles sold fresh, not dried

Miso – soybean mash

Miswa – a fine thin dried noodle

Mongo con hielo – a snack of boiled sweetened mung beans topped with crushed ice, milk and sugar

Morcilla – (Spanish) blood sausage

Morcon – a beef roll

Mukha – face

Municipio, munisipyo – a town hall; the office of the municipality

N

Nasi goreng – (Indonesian) fried rice with meats and vegetables

Nata de coco, de piña – a gelatinous substance grown on coconut water or on pineapple juice

Natilla – custard

Nilaga – boiled; boiled beef with vegetables

Nilasing – drunken; marinated in liquor

Ninong / ninang – godfather / godmother

Noche buena – Christmas eve; the meal eaten then or at midnight

P

Padyak – to stamp one's foot

Paella – (Spanish) rice cooked with fowl, meats, seafood, vegetables, etc.

Pagi – stingray

Pakikipagkapwa-tao – regard for the other

Pakikisama – feeling for the other; fellow-feeling

Paklay – a dish of goat, beef or pork variety meats soured with pineapple and *balimbing*

Pako – edible fern; fiddlehead fern

Paksiw – a dish, usually of fish, cooked in vinegar

Palaka – frog

Palay – unhusked rice

Palayok – clay cooking pot

Paltik, paltic – fake; a home-made gun or weapon

Pamplina – a Spanish oxtail stew

Panara – a meat- or vegetable-filled pasty of rice flour

Pandan – screwpine, the leaves of which are used to render cooked rice fragrant

Pan de sal – literally "bread of salt"; a bun; the most prevalent breakfast bread

Pancit, pansit – a noodle dish

Panga – jaw; usually referring to grilled jaw of yellowfin tuna

Pangtulak – literally "for pushing"; referring to alcoholic drinks for "pushing" the pulutan down

Pansit palabok – a noodle dish characterized by a sauce and sprinkled condiments; also called *pansit luglog*

Panunuluyan – a Christmas play on the search for an inn

Papel de Japon – tissue paper

Parol – lantern

Pasalubong – a gift brought back from a trip

Pastillas de leche – milk pastilles; milk candy

Pata – feet; pork trotters; calf's feet

Patis – fish sauce

Patola – sponge gourd

Paunang salita – foreword

Pavo embuchado – (Spanish) stuffed turkey

Pechay – pakchoy

Pecho – breast; breast meat

Penoy – a hard-boiled duck's egg of incomplete fertilization

Pesa – a dish of chicken or fish boiled with vegetables and often served with a *miso* (soybean mash) sauce

Piko – a variety of mango with a pointed tip; also a children's game

Pinangat – a spicy Bicolano dish of shrimp or meat wrapped in taro leaves and cooked in coconut milk with chilis

Pinasingaw – steamed

Pinipig – young rice pounded, toasted, used for desserts

Plapla – a variety of tilapia

Pochero, puchero – a stew of meat, vegetables and sausages

Pondohan – an eating place at a transportation stop or hub, e.g. a bus terminal

Pospas – a chicken-rice gruel

Prito – fried; thus *pritong manok*, fried chicken

Pulot – molasses, treacle, honey; a thick sweet syrup

Pulutan – from *pulot*, to pick up; finger food to go with drinks

Puso – heart; also the heart-shaped structure in which the child-angel is lowered in the Salubong

Puso ng saging – the banana heart or blossom

Puto – a steamed rice cake; **puto bumbong** is tube-shaped, of violet-colored rice *(pirurutong)* steamed upright in a bamboo tube

Puto-maya – rice cooked with coconut milk and sugar, sometimes served in twists of banana leaf

Q

Quekiam, kekiam – meat roll wrapped in leaf lard; steamed then fried

Queso de bola – ball cheese; Edam cheese

R

Rasyon – ration; referring to food or meals delivered to one's house at mealtimes

Relleno – stuffed; usually referring to stuffed capon/chicken

Rellenong / relyenong bangus – stuffed milkfish

Revuelto – scrambled (egg)

S

Sa malamig – the cry of vendors of cold drinks

Sabaw – broth

Saging – banana; **saging na saba** is the cooking banana

Sahog – shrimp, fish or meat used to flavor boiled or sauteed vegetables

Saing – to boil or steam, e.g. rice or fish

Salabat – ginger tea

Salagubang – June beetle

Salpicado – (Spanish) a dish of tenderloin tips, usually cooked in garlic

Salubong – literally, "to meet"; a folk dramatization of the meeting of Christ and Mary after the resurrection

Saluyot – Jews' mallow; a vegetable favored by Ilocanos

Sampaguita – a small fragrant white flower of the jasmine family, adopted as the Philippine national flower

Sampaloc – tamarind

Sangag – to toast in a pan

Sangke – star anise

Sangkutsa – frying or boiling food slightly until partially cooked

Sans rival – literally "without rival"; a popular dessert of meringue-nut layers filled with butter cream

Sapin-sapin – a rice cake in layers of different colors

Sari-manok – mythical bird in Maranao art and lore

Sawali – woven bamboo walling material

Sayote – chayote, mirliton pear

Sigarilyas – winged bean

Sili – chili pepper; **siling haba** is long and mild; **siling labuyo** is tiny and very hot

Simbang gabi – the nine dawn masses before Christmas

Sinangag – fried rice with garlic

Sineguelas – Spanish plum

Singkamas – yam bean; jicama

Sinigang – a stew of fish, prawns, pork, beef or chicken with vegetables, the broth soured by tamarind, kamias, tomatoes, etc.

Sisig – a Pampango dish of pork cheeks, headmeat, liver

Sitaw – stringbean

Siya – he/she

Siyanse – food turner, a cooking implement

Sosyal – a colloquial term meaning socially pretentious

Sotanghon – mung bean noodle

Suka – vinegar

Suka't bawang – a dipping sauce of vinegar and garlic

Suka't sili – a dipping sauce of vinegar and chili pepper

Suki – a regular customer, or one from whom one regularly buys

Suman – a cake of glutinous rice (*malagkit*), coconut milk and sugar, made with different shapes and wrappings

T

Tabun-tabun – *Hydrophytune orbiculatum*, a chico-like fruit from which is obtained a milk substance that is squeezed into *kinilaw* to remove fish smells and prevent stomach upsets

Tacho – a copper cooking vessel

Taho – soybean milk cake, sliced and served in syrup as a refreshment

Tahong – mussels

Talong – eggplant, aubergine

Tamales – a rice cake usually topped with eggs, meat slices, peanuts and other condiments, and wrapped in banana leaf

Tanglad – lemon grass, citronelle

Tanguingue – *Cybium commerson*, Spanish mackerel

Tapa – sliced dried beef, pork, venison

Tapas – (Spanish) varied, various foods to go with drinks

Tapsi – tapa with sinangag; fried meat with fried rice

Tapsilog – tapa, sinangag, itlog; fried dried meat, fried rice, and a fried egg, a breakfast dish

Tenga – ear; **tenga ng baboy** is a pig's ear

Tengang daga – wood ear; tree fungus

Tertulia – (Spanish) an afternoon or early evening social at which music is played/performed, and light refreshments are served

Tidtad – the Pampango *dinuguan* or blood stew

Tikim – to taste; a taste of

Tikling – Philippine rail

Tinadtad – chopped

Tinapa – smoked fish

Tinola – a dish of chicken or fish boiled with vegetables

Tinubong – Ilocano rice cake cooked in a bamboo tube

Tira-tira – pulled taffy; a candy made by pulling a sugar mixture; *butong-butong* in Ilonggo

Tiulang itum – (Jolo) a tinola variant; beef cooked with condiments, the broth darkened with toasted coconut meat

Tiyan – stomach

Togue – mung beansprout

Tokwa – soy bean cake; **tokwa't baboy**, a dish of pork with tokwa

Tosino, tocino – cured, sweetened pork

Tosilog – tosino, sinangag, itlog; tosino with egg and fried rice

Tsokolate, tsikwate, tsukwate – chocolate drink

Tuba – coconut toddy

Tubao – a square of handwoven plaid cloth, worn in Mindanao as a headdress, neckpiece or scarf

Tulingan – *Auxis Thazard*, big-eyed tuna

Tupig – a rice cake from the Ilocos region, wrapped in banana leaf

Turon – a fried banana with langka, wrapped in *lumpia* wrapper

Turron – (Spanish) nougat (almonds and honey)

Tuyo – dried; fish salted and dried whole

U

Ubad – heart of the banana plant

Ube – purple yam; usually used in the making of sweets

Ubod – heart of palm

Ulam – viand; that which is eaten with rice

Ulang – *Astacidae*, crayfish, crawfish, freshwater lobster

Ulo – head; head meat

Upo – white gourd

Usa – deer

V

Vaquero – (Spanish) one who tends cows; in Ilonggo, one who tends carabaos

W

Walis tingting – a broom made of coconut midribs

Wansoy – cilantro, coriander leaves

Y

Yemas – candied eggyolks

Ylang-ylang, ilang-ilang – fragrant greenish-yellow flowers from which comes a valuable perfume oil

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FROM THE BOOK

What's Cooking? "The old and the new. The provincial and the pop. The slow and the fast. The past, the present, the future. That's what's cooking in Philippine cuisine. Which means that, as the most popular (people-created, people-processed and people-consumed) segment of popular culture, it is dynamic and changing, living and lively."

Writing about Food. "When one describes food, one does not use words alone but the readers' remembering as well -- of past pleasures, savored sensations. One writes on and with the readers' palates, alluding to food tasted as children, drawing on their reservoirs of pleasure. In effect, one draws on all of the culture that shaped oneself and one's readers."

On Mangoes. ". . . we wager that the mango memories of many a Filipino still revolve around fruit ripening to fragrance in Maytime; around fat golden halves dripping their juice on glistening *suman* in Antipolo; around mangoes peeled whole with the hands on farms and at fiestas . . . to drip on chin and clothes; around mangoes chilled in river water rather than in refrigerators, while the feasters-to-be swim in the rivers of childhood; around mangoes sweet because stolen from consenting uncles or neighbors; around the fruit not as commercial product, but as pledge of time and season and memory."

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Among her books are: **The Iloilo Zarzuela, 1903-1930**; **In Performance: Panitikan**, a video-documentary and monograph; and in co-authorship with Edilberto N. Alegre, **Writers and Their Milieu I** and **II**; the series on dining in Manila and the provinces called **Lasa**; **Sarap: Essays on Philippine Food**; and **Kinilaw: A Philippine Cuisine of Freshness.**

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